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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XXV.

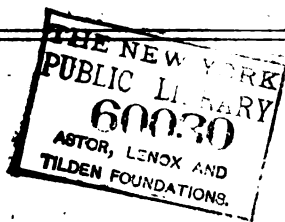
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"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 598. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1880.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LX. LORD GERALD IN FURTHER TROUBLE.

WHEN Silverbridge got back to the house he was by no means well pleased with himself. In the first place he was unhappy to think that Mabel was unhappy, and that he had made her so. And then she had told him that he would not have dared to have acted as he had done, but that her father and her brother were careless to defend her. He had replied fiercely that a legion of brothers, ready to act on her behalf, would not have altered his conduct; but not the less did he feel that he had behaved badly to her. It could not now be altered. He could not now be untrue to Isabel, but certainly he had said a word or two to Mabel which he could not remember without regret. He had not thought that a word from him could have been so powerful. Now, when that word was recalled to his memory by the girl to whom it had been spoken, he could not quite acquit himself.

And Mabel had declared to him that she would at once appeal to his father. There was an absurdity in this at which he could not but smile—that the girl should complain to his father because he would not marry her! But even in doing this she might cause him great vexation. He could not bring himself to ask her not to tell her story to the duke. He must take all that as it might come.

While he was thinking of all this in his own room a servant brought him two letters. From the first which he opened he soon perceived that it contained an

account of more troubles. It was from his brother Gerald, and was written from Auld Reikie, the name of a house in Scotland belonging to Lord Nidderdale's people.

"DEAR SILVER,—I have got into a most awful scrape. That fellow Percival is here, and Dolly Longstaff, and Nidderdale, and Popplecourt, and Jack Hindes, and Perry who is in the Coldstreams, and one or two more, and there has been a lot of cards, and I have lost ever so much money. I wouldn't mind it so much but Percival has won it all—a fellow I hate; and now I owe him—three thousand four hundred pounds! He has just told me he is hard up and that he wants the money before the week is over. He can't be hard up because he has won from everybody—but of course I had to tell him that I would pay him.

"Can you help me? Of course I know that I have been a fool. Percival knows what he is about and plays regularly for money. When I began I didn't think that I could lose above twenty or thirty pounds. But it got on from one thing to another, and, when I woke this morning I felt I didn't know what to do with myself. You can't think how the luck went against me. Everybody says that they never saw such cards.

"And now do tell me how I am to get out of it. Could you manage it with Mr. Moreton? Of course I will make it all right with you some day. Moreton always lets you have whatever you want. But perhaps he couldn't do this without letting the governor know. I would rather anything than that. There is some money owing at Oxford also, which of course he must know.

"I was thinking that perhaps I might

get it from some of those fellows in London. There are people called Comfort and Criball, who let men have money constantly. I know two or three up at Oxford who have had it from them. Of course I couldn't go to them as you could do, for, in spite of what the governor said to us up in London one day, there is nothing that must come to me. But you could do anything in that way, and of course I would stand to it.

"I knew you won't throw me over, because you have always been such a brick. But above all things don't tell the governor. Percival is such a nasty fellow, otherwise I shouldn't mind it. He spoke this morning as though I was treating him badly—though the money was only lost last night; and he looked at me in a way that made me long to kick him. I told him not to hurry himself, and that he should have his money. If he speaks to me like that again I will kick him.

"I will be at Matching as soon as possible, but I cannot go till this is settled. Nid is a brick.—Your affectionate brother,

"GERALD."

The other was from Nidderdale, and referred to the same subject.

"DEAR SILVERBRIDGE,—Here has been a terrible nuisance. Last night some of the men got to playing cards, and Gerald lost a terribly large sum to Percival. I did all that I could to stop it, because I saw that Percival was going in for a big thing. I fancy that he got as much from Dolly Longstaff as he did from Gerald; but it won't matter much to Dolly; or, if it does, nobody cares. Gerald told me he was writing to you about it, so I am not betraying him.

"What is to be done? Of course Percival is behaving badly. He always does. I can't turn him out of the house, and he seems to intend to stick to Gerald till he has got the money. He has taken a cheque from Dolly dated two months hence. I am in an awful funk for fear Gerald should pitch into him. He will, in a minute, if anything rough is said to him. I suppose the straightest thing would be to go to the duke at once, but Gerald won't hear of it. I hope you won't think me wrong to tell you. If I could help him I would. You know what a bad docter I am for that sort of complaint.—Yours always,

"NIDDERDALE."

The dinner-bell had rung before Silverbridge had come to an end of thinking of this new vexation, and he had not as yet

made up his mind what he had better do for his brother. There was one thing, as to which he was determined that it should not be done by him, nor, if he could prevent it, by Gerald. There should be no dealings with Comfort and Criball. The duke had succeeded, at any rate, in filling his son's mind with a horror of aid of that sort. Nidderdale had suggested that the "straightest" thing would be to go direct to the duke. That no doubt would be straight—and efficacious. The duke would not have allowed a boy of his to be a debtor to Lord Percival for a day, let the debt have been contracted how it might. But Gerald had declared against this course—and Silverbridge himself would have been most unwilling to adopt it. How could he have told that story to the duke, while there was that other infinitely more important story of his own, which must be told at once?

In the midst of all these troubles, he went down to dinner. "Lady Mabel," said the duke, "tells me that you two have been to see Sir Gay's look-out."

She was standing close to the duke and whispered a word into his ear. "You said you would call me Mabel."

"Yes, sir," said Silverbridge, "and I have made up my mind that Sir Guy never stayed there very long in winter. It was awfully cold."

"I had furs on," said Mabel. "What a lovely spot it is, even in this weather." Then dinner was announced. She had not been cold. She could still feel the tingling heat of her blood as she had implored him to love her.

Silverbridge felt that he must write to his brother by the first post. The communication was of a nature that would bear no delay. If his hands had been free he would himself have gone off to Auld Reikie. At last he made up his mind. The first letter he wrote was neither to Nidderdale nor to Gerald, but to Lord Percival himself.

"DEAR PERCIVAL,—Gerald writes me word that he has lost to you at cards three thousand four hundred pounds, and he wants me to get him the money. It is a terrible nuisance, and he has been an ass. But of course I shall stand to him for anything he wants. I have not got three thousand four hundred pounds in my pocket, and I don't know anyone who has; that is, among our set. But I send you my I. O. U. for the amount, and will promise to get you the money in two months. I

suppose that will be sufficient, and that you will not bother Gerald any more about it. —Yours truly, SILVERBRIDGE."

Then he copied this letter and enclosed the copy in another which he wrote to his brother.

"DEAR GERALD,—What an ass you have been! But I don't suppose you are worse than I was at Doncaster. I will have nothing to do with such people as Comfort and Cribball. That is the sure way to the d—! As for telling Moreton, that is only a polite and roundabout way of telling the governor. He would immediately ask the governor what was to be done. You will see what I have done. Of course I must tell the governor before the end of February, as I cannot get the money in any other way. But that I will do. It does seem hard upon him. Not that the money will hurt him much; but that he would so like to have a steady-going son.

"I suppose Percival won't make any bother about the I. O. U. He'll be a fool if he does. I wouldn't kick him if I were you—unless he says anything very bad. You would be sure to come to grief somehow. He is a beast.—Your affectionate brother, SILVERBRIDGE."

With these letters that special grief was removed from his mind for awhile. Looking over the dark river of possible trouble which seemed to run between the present moment and the time at which the money must be procured, he thought that he had driven off this calamity of Gerald's to an infinite distance. But into that dark river he must now plunge almost at once. On the next day, he managed so that there should be no walk with Mabel. In the evening he could see that the duke was uneasy—but not a word was said to him. On the following morning Lady Mabel took her departure. When she went from the door, both the duke and Silverbridge were there to bid her farewell. She smiled, and was as gracious as though everything had gone according to her heart's delight. "Dear Duke, I am so obliged to you for your kindness," she said, as she put up her cheek for him to kiss. Then she gave her hand to Silverbridge. "Of course you will come and see me in town." And she smiled upon them all—having courage enough to keep down all her sufferings.

"Come in here a moment, Silverbridge," said the father as they returned into the house together. "How is it now between you and her?"

CHAPTER LXI. "BONE OF MY BONE."

"How is it now between you and her?"

That was the question which the duke put to his son as soon as he had closed the door of the study. Lady Mabel had just been dismissed from the front door on her journey, and there could be no doubt as to the 'her' intended. No such question would have been asked had not Silverbridge himself declared to his father his purpose of making Lady Mabel his wife. On that subject the duke, without such authority, would not have interfered. But he had been consulted, had acceded, and had encouraged the idea by excessive liberality on his part. He had never dropped it out of his mind for a moment. But when he found that the girl was leaving his house without any explanation, then he became restless and inquisitive.

They say that perfect-love casteth out fear. If it be so the love of children to their parents is seldom altogether perfect—and perhaps had better not be quite perfect. With this young man it was not that he feared anything which his father could do to him, that he believed that in consequence of the declaration which he had to make his comforts and pleasures would be curtailed, or his independence diminished. He knew his father too well to dread such punishment. But he feared that he would make his father unhappy, and he was conscious that he had so often sinned in that way. He had stumbled so frequently! Though in action he would so often be thoughtless—yet he understood perfectly the effect which had been produced on his father's mind by his conduct. He had it at heart "to be good to the governor," to gratify that most loving of all possible friends, who, as he knew well, was always thinking of his welfare. And yet he never had been "good to the governor"—nor had Gerald—and to all this was added his sister's determined perversity. It was thus he feared his father.

He paused a moment, while the duke stood with his back to the fire looking at him. "I'm afraid that it is all over, sir," he said.

"All over!"

"I am afraid so."

"Why is it all over? Has she refused you?"

"Well, sir—it isn't quite that." Then he paused again. It was so difficult to begin about Isabel Boncassen.

"I am sorry for that," said the duke, almost hesitating; "very sorry. You will

understand, I hope, that I should make no enquiry in such a matter, unless I had felt myself warranted in doing so by what you had yourself told me in London."

"I understand all that."

"I have been very anxious about it, and have even gone so far as to make some preparations for what I had hoped would be your early marriage."

"Preparations!" exclaimed Silverbridge, thinking of church bells, bride cake, and wedding presents.

"As to the property. I am so anxious that you should enjoy all the settled independence which can belong to an English gentleman. I never plough or sow. I know no more of sheep and bulls than of the extinct animals of earlier ages. I would not have it so with you. I would fain see you surrounded by those things which ought to interest a nobleman in this country. Why is it all over with Lady Mabel Grex?"

The young man looked imploringly at his father, as though earnestly begging that nothing more might be said about Mabel. "I had changed my mind before I found out that she was really in love with me!" He could not say that. He could not hint that he might still have Mabel if he would. The only thing for him was to tell everything about Isabel Boncassen. He felt that in doing this he must begin with himself. "I have rather changed my mind, sir," he said, "since we were walking together in London that night."

"Have you quarrelled with Lady Mabel?"

"Oh dear no. I am very fond of Mabel—only not just like that."

"Not just like what?"

"I had better tell the whole truth at once."

"Certainly tell the truth, Silverbridge. I cannot say that you are bound in duty to tell the whole truth even to your father in such a matter."

"But I mean to tell you everything. Mabel did not seem to care for me much—in London. And then I saw someone I liked better." Then he stopped, but as the duke did not ask any questions he plunged on. "It was Miss Boncassen."

"Miss Boncassen!"

"Yes, sir," said Silverbridge, with a little access of decision.

"The American young lady?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know anything of her family?"

"I think I know all about her family. It is not much in the way of—family."

"You have not spoken to her about it?"

"Yes, sir—I have settled it all with her, on condition——"

"Settled it with her that she is to be your wife!"

"Yes, sir—on condition that you will approve."

"Did you go to her, Silverbridge, with such a stipulation as that?"

"It was not like that."

"How was it then?"

"She stipulated. She will marry me if you will consent."

"It was she then who thought of my wishes and my feelings—not you?"

"I knew that I loved her. What is a man to do when he feels like that? Of course I meant to tell you." The duke was now looking very black. "I thought you liked her, sir."

"Liked her! I did like her. I do like her. What has that to do with it? Do you think I like none but those with whom I should think it fitting to ally myself in marriage? Is there to be no duty in such matters, no restraint, no feeling of what is due to your own name, and to others who bear it? The lad out there who is sweeping the walks can marry the first girl that pleases his eye if she will take him. Perhaps his lot is the happier because he owns such liberty. Have you the same freedom?"

"I suppose I have—by law."

"Do you recognise no duty but what the laws impose upon you? Should you be disposed to eat and drink in bestial excess, because the laws would not hinder you? Should you lie and sleep all the day, the law would say nothing. Should you neglect every duty which your position imposes on you, the law could not interfere. To such a one as you the law can be no guide. You should so live as not to come near the law—or to have the law to come near to you. From all evil against which the law bars you, you should be barred, at an infinite distance, by honour, by conscience, and nobility. Does the law require patriotism, philanthropy, self-abnegation, public service, purity of purpose, devotion to the needs of others who have been placed in the world below you? The law is a great thing—because men are poor and weak, and bad. And it is great, because where it exists in its strength, no tyrant can be above it. But between you and me there should be no mention of law as the guide of conduct. Speak to me of honour, of duty, and of nobility; and tell me what they require of you."

Silverbridge listened in silence and with something of true admiration in his heart. But he felt the strong necessity of declaring his own convictions on one special point here, at once, in this new crisis of the conversation. That accident in regard to the colour of the Dean's lodge had stood in the way of his logical studies—so that he was unable to put his argument into proper shape; but there belonged to him a certain natural astuteness which told him that he must put in his rejoinder at this particular point. "I think I am bound in honour and in duty to marry Miss Boncassen," he said. "And, if I understand what you mean, by nobility just as much."

"Because you have promised."

"Not only for that. I have promised and therefore I am bound. She has—well, she has said that she loves me, and therefore of course I am bound. But it is not only that."

"What do you mean?"

"I suppose a man ought to marry the woman he loves—if he can get her."

"No; no; not so; not always so. Do you think that love is a passion that can not be withstood?"

"But here we are both of one mind, sir. When I saw how you seemed to take to her—"

"Take to her! Can I not interest myself in human beings without wishing to make them flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone? What am I to think of you? It was but the other day that all that you are now telling me of Miss Boncassen, you were telling me of Lady Mabel Grex." Here poor Silverbridge bit his lips and shook his head, and looked down upon the ground. This was the weak part of his case. He could not tell his father the whole story about Mabel—that she had coyed his love, so that he had been justified in thinking himself free from any claim in that direction when he had encountered the infinitely sweeter charms of Isabel Boncassen. "You are weak as water," said the unhappy father.

"I am not weak in this."

"Did you not say exactly the same about Lady Mabel?"

There was a pause, so that he was driven to reply. "I found her as I thought indifferent, and then—I changed my mind."

"Indifferent! What does she think about it now? Does she know of this? How does it stand between you two at the present moment?"

"She knows that I am engaged to—Miss Boncassen."

"Does she approve of it?"

"Why should I ask her, sir? I have not asked her."

"Then why did you tell her? She could not but have spoken her mind when you told her. There must have been much between you when this was talked of."

The unfortunate young man was obliged to take some time before he could answer this appeal. He had to own that his father had some justice on his side, but at the same time he could reveal nothing of Mabel's secret. "I told her because we were friends. I did not ask her approval; but she did disapprove. She thought that your son should not marry an American girl without family."

"Of course she would feel that."

"Now I have told you what she said, and I hope you will ask me no further questions about her. I cannot make Lady Mabel my wife—though for the matter of that, I ought not to presume that she would take me if I wished it. I had intended to ask you to-day to consent to my marriage with Miss Boncassen."

"I cannot give you my consent."

"Then I am very unhappy."

"How can I believe as to your unhappiness, when you would have said the same about Lady Mabel Grex a few weeks ago?"

"Nearly eight months," said Silverbridge.

"What is the difference? It is not the time, but the disposition of the man! I cannot give you my consent. The young lady sees it in the right light, and that will make your escape easy."

"I do not want to escape."

"She has indicated the cause which will separate you."

"I will not be separated from her," said Silverbridge, who was beginning to feel that he was subjugated to tyranny. If he chose to marry Isabel, no one could have a right to hinder him.

"I can only hope that you will think better of it, and that when next you speak to me on that or any other subject you will answer me with less arrogance."

This rebuke was terrible to the son, whose mind at the present moment was filled with two ideas, that of constancy to Isabel Boncassen, and then of respect and affection for his father. "Indeed, sir," he said, "I am not arrogant, and if I have answered improperly I beg your pardon. But my mind is made up about

this, and I thought you had better know how it is."

"I do not see that I can say anything else to you now."

"I think of going to Harrington this afternoon." Then the duke with further very visible annoyance, asked where Harrington was. It was explained that Harrington was Lord Chiltern's seat, Lord Chiltern being the master of the Brake hounds; that it was his son's purpose to remain six weeks among the Brake hounds; but that he should stay only a day or two with Lord Chiltern. Then it appeared that Silverbridge intended to put himself up at a hunting inn in the neighbourhood, and the duke did not at all like the plan. That his son should choose to live at an inn, when the comforts of an English country house were open to him, was distasteful and almost offensive to the duke. And the matter was not improved when he was made to understand that all this was to be done for the sake of hunting. There had been the shooting in Scotland; then the racing—ah, alas! yes—the racing, and the betting at Doncaster! Then the shooting at Matching had been made to appear to be the chief reason why he himself had been living in his own house! And now his son was going away to live at an inn in order that more time might be devoted to hunting! "Why can't you hunt here at home, if you must hunt?"

"It is all woodland," said Silverbridge.

"I thought you wanted woods. Lord Chiltern is always troubling me about Trumpington Wood."

This breeze about the hunting enabled the son to escape without any further allusion to Miss Boncassen. He did escape, and proceeded to turn over in his mind all that had been said. His tale had been told. A great burden was thus taken off his shoulders. He could tell Isabel so much, and thus free himself from the suspicion of having been afraid to declare his purpose. She should know what he had done, and should be made to understand that he had been firm. He had, he thought, been very firm, and gave himself some credit on that head. His father, no doubt, had been firm too, but that he had expected. His father had said much. All that about honour and duty had been very good; but this was certain—that when a young man has promised a young woman he ought to keep his word. And he thought that there were certain changes going on in the management of the world which his father did not

quite understand. Fathers never do quite understand the changes which are manifest to their sons. Some years ago it might have been improper that an American girl should be elevated to the rank of an English duchess; but now all that was altered.

The duke spent the rest of the day alone, and was not happy in his solitude. All that Silverbridge had told him was sad to him. He had taught himself to think that he could love Lady Mabel as an affectionate father wishes to love his son's wife. He had set himself to wish to like her, and had been successful. Being most anxious that his son should marry he had prepared himself to be more than ordinarily liberal—to be in every way gracious. His children were now everything to him, and among his children his son and heir was the chief. From the moment in which he had heard from Silverbridge that Lady Mabel was chosen he had given himself up to considering how he might best promote their interests, how he might best enable them to live with that dignity and splendour which he himself had unwisely despised. That the son who was to come after him should be worthy of the place assigned to his name had been, of personal objects, the nearest to his heart. There had been failures, but still there had been left room for hope. The boy had been unfortunate at Eton; but how many unfortunate boys have become great men! He had disgraced himself by his folly at college—but, though some lads will be men at twenty, others are then little more than children. The fruit that ripens the soonest is seldom the best. Then had come Tifto and the racing mania. Nothing could be worse than Tifto and racehorses. But from that evil Silverbridge had seemed to be made free by the very disgust which the vileness of the circumstance had produced. Perhaps Tifto driving a nail into his horse's foot had on the whole been serviceable. That apostasy from the political creed of the Pallisers had been a blow—much more felt than the loss of the seventy thousand pounds—but even under that blow he had consoled himself by thinking that a conservative patriotic nobleman may serve his country—even as a Conservative. In the midst of this he had felt that the surest resource for his son against evil would be in an early marriage. If he would marry becomingly, then might everything still be made pleasant. If his son would marry becomingly, nothing which a father

could do should be wanting to add splendour and dignity to his son's life.

In thinking of all this he had by no means regarded his own mode of life with favour. He knew how jejune his life had been—how devoid of other interests than that of the public service to which he had devoted himself. He was thinking of this when he told his son that he had neither ploughed and sowed or been the owner of sheep or oxen. He often thought of this, when he heard those around him talking of the sports, which, though he condemned them as the employments of a life, he now regarded wistfully, hopelessly as far as he himself was concerned, as proper recreations for a man of wealth. Silverbridge should have it all, if he could arrange it. The one thing necessary was a fitting wife; and the fitting wife had been absolutely chosen by Silverbridge himself.

It may be conceived, therefore, that he was again unhappy. He had already been driven to acknowledge that these children of his—thoughtless, restless, though they seemed to be—still had a will of their own. In all which how like they were to their mother! With her, however, his word, though it might be resisted, had never lost its authority. When he had declared that a thing should not be done, she had never persisted in saying that she would do it. But with his children it was otherwise. What power had he over Silverbridge—or for the matter of that, even over his daughter? They had only to be firm, and he knew that he must be conquered.

"I thought that you liked her," Silverbridge had said to him. How utterly unconscious, thought the duke, must the young man have been of all that his position required of him when he used such an argument! Like her? He did like her. She was clever, accomplished, beautiful, well-mannered—as far as he knew, endowed with all good qualities! Would not many an old Roman have said as much for some favourite Greek slave—for some freedman whom he would admit to his very heart? But what old Roman ever dreamed of giving his daughter to the son of a Greek bondsman! Had he done so, what would have become of the name of a Roman citizen? And was it not his duty to fortify and maintain that higher, smaller, more precious pinnacle of rank on which Fortune had placed him and his children?

Like her? Yes! he liked her certainly. He had by no means always found that he best liked the companionship of his own

order. He had liked to feel around him the free battle of the House of Commons. He liked the power of attack and defence in carrying on which an English politician cares nothing for rank. He liked to remember that the son of any tradesman might, by his own merits, become a peer of Parliament. He would have liked to think that his son should share all these tastes with him. Yes; he liked Isabel Boncassen. But how different was that liking from a desire that she should be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh!

SCIENCE UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

A LOVE of Nature frequently begets a love of Science. The love of flowers brings a yearning for some knowledge of their families, and thus botany becomes the ruling passion of a life. A love of birds induces a close watching of their ways, and books on ornithology are largely consulted by those who fancy they have found out some new fascinating fact. So too the finding of a fossil may lead to careful study of the soil which has surrounded it, and presently the student grows into the geologist, and becomes a scientific hammerer of rocks.

Whence springs a love of Nature? That may be a problem difficult to solve; much more difficult indeed than to trace its gradual progress, and to notice its effects. A boy will take as naturally to bird-nesting as a girl to nursing dolls. It might puzzle them to give a reason for their likings, yet they would certainly be pained were they to struggle to suppress them. A love of dolls is just as natural as a taste for lollipops. Such likings are inborn, and are not produced by fashion or æsthetic culture, like the passion for old warming-pans or ugly ancient pictures. But it is not every child-love that grows up into manhood; nor, for the most part, is there cause for wishing it were otherwise. A boyish greed for getting bird's eggs, or collecting moths and butterflies, may be, and is too commonly, a purely selfish passion, inductive of much cruelty, and quite unworthy of encouragement. There are, however, cases where the true spirit of enquiry peeps out in the boy, and the young bird-nester displays such early reverence for Nature, and such watchful patience in studying her wonders, as are certain indications of his growth into the naturalist.

There is no royal road to learning, we are told. Still, it cannot be denied that in

their college progress along the paths of knowledge, men who live like princes may be aided by a coach. A crammer may do much to help a man to pass a competitive "exam."; and although the aid be costly, it is a common luxury in this expensive age.

But Dame Nature keeps a school where wealth brings small advantage to those willing to be taught. Rich and poor alike are admitted free of charge to her course of education, and no cramming can supplant the teaching which she gives. As for her school-books, she supplies them gratis in the running brooks. For knowledge of her living literature, her pupils must give ear unto the tongues which she has put for them in trees; while to study her dead languages, she bids her students go and pore over the lessons found in stones, and the fossils in the rocks.

Among the humbler scholars who have studied at this dame's school, a pair of Scottish students, Robert Dick and Thomas Edward, have risen to take honours and to stand in the first class. Doubtless many a poor hero has fallen without record on the battle-fields of science, and has passed away unknown, as did the brave men who lived before the kingly Agamemnon, for want of an historian to chronicle their deeds. But, happily the story of these two Scotchmen has been written by Dr. Smiles, the well-known author of *Self Help*; one of whose chief merits and charms as a biographer is that he is never obtrusive of himself. With a loving hand he traces the career of his two heroes, and leaves the simple narrative to tell its own true tale. Such self-sacrifice for science, such study under difficulties, such struggles with adversity, such manly courage and endurance, such homely, modest heroism, and patient striving after knowledge, it has rarely been the fortune of an author to describe. But Dr. Smiles rarely stops to comment in his chronicling, and never stoops to needless compliment, nor wastes his space in superfluities of description and detail. Biographies like these are useful and instructive, as well as entertaining; and must not be confounded with those feeble small-beer chronicles, which are not uncommonly brought forward as biographies, but may very far more worthily be classed with gilt-leaved albums, and massive antiquated dictionaries, and ponderous old atlases, and grandly-bound backgammon-boards, and other quite unreadable mere fillings-up of libraries, which

Charles Lamb quaintly designates as books that are not books.

A true love of Nature runs but very seldom quite smoothly in its course, and Thomas Edward's boyish passion certainly proved no exception to the rule. Rats and mice and such small deer, with tadpoles, crabs, and horse-leeches, were the most dearly cherished objects of his early love, and he came to some rough handling through his passion for such pets. When he took his walks abroad—indeed, as soon as he could crawl—he always crammed his pockets full of creeping things. Whatever he could catch he was sure to carry home; and his parents had in consequence a rather lively time of it. His father, a poor hand-loom weaver, lived in a small house, which soon proved not half big enough to hold his boy's menagerie of "beasties," as he called them, chiefly captured by the Deeside and in the woods and pools and ponds near Aberdeen. Tam's darlings soon became a nuisance to the neighbours, for straggling leeches sucked their legs, and runaway rats and mice, escaping from Tam's custody, played havoc with their cupboards.

The young naturalist was scolded, threatened, whipped, and sent off supperless to bed. Starvation failed, however, to cure him of his love. The next day, home he would come smiling, with a pill-box full of beetles, or a nest of nice young rats. Finding that flogging did not seem to act as a deterrent, his mother fastened her small truant to the leg of a large table, and tied his wrists together with a bit of cord. But with the help of a little sister he contrived to push the table close up to the grate, and so burned away his shackles, and pretty nearly set the house on fire besides. Next his clothes were taken away to keep him safe indoors; but dressed in an old petticoat, he scuttled off as soon as his mother's back was turned, and caught a fever, which half killed him, by spending all the day crab-hunting in the mud.

How, when barely four years old, he was accounted the best bird-nester in the town of Aberdeen; how at that small age he tore a wasps' nest from a tree, and, though stung severely, packed it in his shirt, and carried it safe home, as a treasure to be placed in the museum he had founded underneath the stairs; how, after this brave exploit, he was thrice expelled from schools, and most unmercifully flogged there for his fondness for his "beasts;" how his education ceased ere he was six, when he could read but badly and could

not write at all ; how he was then sent to work for his livelihood, and after some years at a factory, was apprenticed at eleven to a drunken shoemaker, who killed his tame pet sparrow and kicked him into the street ; how, to escape from this tormentor, he ran away from home with sixpence in his pocket, and in walking back again was cheived by a bull ; how, when undergoing a month's drill in the militia, he broke the ranks one day to run after a butterfly, and was put under arrest for it, and narrowly escaped punishment ; how, after having married early upon no larger an income than nine-and-sixpence a week, he worked hard at his shoemaking for fifteen hours a day, and then started on his rambles with his often rather scanty supper in his pocket, and caught moths, and mice, and beetles, or watched owls and other night-birds ; and had battles in the dark with polecats, rats, and badgers ; and slept in holes and hedge-sides, half perishing with cold, and pitilessly drenched ; and was often in great peril in his scrambles on the rocks, and once was stricken senseless and crushed into a chasm by a fall of forty feet ; all this may be found most carefully recorded, and may serve as further evidence that Tam Edward's love of nature was not very greatly favoured in its course.

So the passion of his boyhood survived in him most strongly when he came to man's estate, and to none other in his poverty had poor Tam the luck to come. Shoemaking was not vastly to his mind, we may be sure, but he made himself a "don" at it, and stuck well to his last, although he had small reverence for the saying that a shoemaker should never look beyond it. People often wondered what made him a naturalist. The only answer he could give them was that somehow he loved naturally every living thing. Study and skill may make a lawyer, or a cobbler, or a chimney-sweep ; but naturalists, like poets, only come of God's own growth.

Not even love of wife and home could wean him from his early taste for leaving it at nightfall, to roam about the country in his favourite pursuits. His patience in these long and dreary wanderings and watchings was only to be equalled by his never-failing courage. His means were very limited, but his bravery was boundless ; and though often racked with rheumatism, he never flinched from angry weather, or exposure, or fatigue. To aid him in his gatherings he bought himself a gun : a rickety old weapon that cost but

four-and-sixpence, the barrel being tied on with a bit of twine. The bowl of a tobacco-pipe served by way of charger, and for lack of any shot-pouch he used a paper bag. He carried a little chloroform for killing moths and butterflies ; and his coat-pockets were crammed with boxes and small bottles for holding all the little creatures he could catch. Thus slenderly equipped, he started on his prowls, and walked, and worked, and watched with such unfailing perseverance, that in spite of many drawbacks and grievous disappointments, he collected many thousands of interesting specimens in notably few years.

Excepting in the winter, he usually slept out of doors five at least, sometimes even six nights in the week, and on Sundays only ever rested from his trade, and likewise from the labours which took up his leisure time. What rare plants and fish he found, what strange birds he saw and studied, and occasionally shot, to add to his collection, can only here be hinted at ; nor may space adequate be spared to tell of his adventures, troubles, perils, and escapes. Sore were his trials, and many his mishaps. Mice and rats ate up his cherished moths and butterflies, and cats destroyed two thousand of his dried plants at one fell swoop. Yet after four years' patient toiling he had gathered a collection which completely filled six carts when carried from his home in Banff to Aberdeen. There it was shown publicly at the modest charge of sixpence a head, tradespeople half-price ; and the specimens were so curious, that when the exhibitor declared them to be all of his own gathering, he was but half believed.

Although a great success undoubtedly, if viewed as the achievement of a simple working shoemaker, the exhibition proved financially a most disastrous failure. Far from bringing any profit to its owner, it deeply sunk him into debt, and well-nigh drove him to despair. After six sad weeks of acting as a showman, poor Tam was forced to sell his four years' hard-won gatherings ; and the twenty pounds they brought him scarcely covered what he owed. In his despondency and sorrow at the failure of his enterprise, and weakened as his brain had been by want of rest and proper nourishment, it can hardly seem surprising that a passing thought of suicide should flash across his mind. Under its influence one evening he hurried to the sea-shore, threw off his coat, and was about to rush into the waves, when

his notice was attracted by a little flock of sanderlings, which were feeding very quietly and piping on the shore. Among them he detected a bird of different habits and of somewhat darker hue. He had never seen the like of this strange bird before, and his instincts quickly led him to follow the wild flock in their flight along the coast. Ere long they flew over the river, and left him gazing still, and guessing what could be the little stranger in their midst. Then having in his wonder forgotten all his woes, he calmly went back for his coat, and soon found himself at home, quite cured of the mad impulse which had sent him forth. Thus it happened that his ever strongly-ruling passion as a naturalist, which had from his very childhood often brought him into suffering, now proved the providential saviour of his life.

Tam returned to Banff bereaved of all his hard-earned treasures, and burdened with a wife and five young children to support. But he set pluckily to work again, and speedily began anew at his old trade and his old tramps. At thirty-five years old he was the father of eight children, and was earning for their maintenance fifteen shillings a week. When kept indoors by stress of weather after his day's labour, he employed his leisure time in stuffing birds and animals, and in making cases for his specimens, which he regarded as a savings' bank against a rainy day. He likewise gave up some odd moments to the grievous occupation of trying to learn grammar, and of teaching himself to write. That he had no great fondness for these polite accomplishments it may fairly be surmised, seeing by what cruelty the schooling of his childhood was embittered in his mind. But he plodded bravely on with nobody to help him; and before long he began to write to local newspapers, describing his discoveries and outdoor observations. Unluckily he shared the fate of many a beginner; for his articles, not being of much profit to his family, were not a source of pride to them, and simply served to light the fire. A few only have by lucky accident been saved; and these afford such pleasant reading, and evince such close acquaintance with and studying of Nature, that Dr. Smiles has done most wisely to admit them to his book. If perchance they lack the graces of fine writing, they have the higher charm of simple truthfulness and freshness; just as a rough, hasty, outdoor sketch from Nature may surpass a finished landscape, painted

mostly from mere memory, and perhaps partly under gaslight.

Among the many rapturous admirers and professed students of Nature, having much more ample means of study at command, how few would take the trouble to notice the loud snapping noise at times made by the caterpillar of the death's-head moth; or to put on record that its *chrysalis* squeaks audibly when on the point to change, and that the moth when quite mature is gifted with a voice, which it can modulate at will—now sad and complaining, like the moan of a sick child, and now acute and shrill, like the squeaking of a mouse? Fewer still, it may be guessed, would have the pluck to grip a polecat by the throat, and, defiant of its claws, deftly stifle it with chloroform, so as not to spoil the beauty of its skin. Nor would many have the patience to creep stealthily along the shore, and to lie there for an hour without moving a limb, closely watching all the while a brace of little turnstones, which, with the assistance of a third (whose arrival they welcomed with a murmur of applause), at length triumphed in their task of turning over a dead cod-fish, partly buried in the beach.

Seeing how descriptively these little tales are told, few readers will refrain from thinking it a pity that mere have not survived; or from regretting, with their teller, that natural historians should take such pride in the abundance of their technical descriptions, and care so little for the paucity of details they supply about the habits of live creatures, and their ways and means of life. Writers such as Audubon are most devoutly to be wished for, so that readers be attracted to the wonders of Nature, without being affrighted by dry scientific terms. A poor untraveller shoe-maker, fast tethered to his stool, had many disadvantages to daunt him as a naturalist; yet by steady perseverance he managed to see much, and, with small schooling to help him, he somehow found the words to describe well what he saw. Hardly more minute in details was the pen of Gilbert White than that which chronicled the battle of the heron and the crows, and showed how they attacked it right and left for nearly half an hour, and drove it to disgorge the fish which it had caught. Of no less interest is the narrative of the tern which had been wounded being rescued by his comrades, two pairs of them alternately lifting him along, for a few yards at a stretch, until they bore him out of shot.

Nor in the History of Selborne is there a tale more full of pathos than that of the poor wild duck, which, after a heavy snow-storm, was found dead upon her nest. She had given up her life, which she might easily have saved, in trying to shield her thirteen little ones, which were very nearly hatched. Self-preservation is the first law of nature; but the instincts of maternity are stronger than all law. The finder well might be affected by the sight of this poor duck, and he did well to dig a hole and choose a solid piece of turf to serve by way of covering; and then, wrapping them up gently in a winding-sheet of paper, to give a decent burial to the mother and her brood.

Scarce less touching is the story of the hare-hunt by two "hoodies"—i.e., hooded crows—poor pussy screaming piteously, while her merciless pursuers kept pouncing down upon her head until they doubtless pecked her eyes out. Nor is the tale that follows less tragic in its ending, with just a gleam of humour to give contrast to the grimness, reminding one a little of the Walrus and the Oysters:

"Out on the hills at Boyndie, concealed amongst some trees and bushes, waiting for a cuckoo which I expected to pass, I observed a half-grown rabbit emerge from some whins and begin to frolic about close by. Presently down pops a hoodie, and approaches the rabbit, whisking, prancing, and jumping. He seemed to be most friendly, courteous, and humoursome to the little rabbit. All of a sudden, however, as if he meant to finish the joke with a ride, he mounts the back of the rabbit. Up springs the latter, and away he runs. But short was his race. A few sturdy blows about the head from the bill of the crow laid him dead in a few seconds."

Gamekeepers might profit by this little story, and by another little tale connected with his night-watching which Thomas Edward tells. Like many other labourers who live by outdoor work, gamekeepers are prone to cherish the idea that a drop of something warm will serve to keep the cold out. Many a strong man sorely suffers and is stricken through the fatal ignorance that bids him put his faith in this popular delusion. It is a sanitary fact that nothing makes the system more sensitive to chill than the frequent use of stimulating drink. That beer produces rheumatism there can be no doubt, nor is there any question that the very worst exposure and the very hardest labour are always borne the best by men of strictest temperance. The life

of Thomas Edward gives full evidence of this. Few men have worked harder by night as well as day, or have been more exposed to cruel wind and wet, and all the trying changes of foul and wintry weather that beset a northern clime. Acting very much against his friends' advice, he never had recourse to stimulants to help him in his work or give him comfort in his rest. Night after night he crept beneath a hedge or crawled into a hole for shelter while he slept, but he could never be tempted to carry any whisky with him, nor could he be persuaded to touch it when at home. Sometimes his wife indulged him with a couple of hard-boiled eggs for his *al fresco* supper, but it was not very often that he could afford such luxuries, and his usual outdoor diet was a drink of plain cold water and some home-made oatmeal cakes.

It was his rigid temperance that chiefly served to reconcile his wife to his nocturnal wanderings, and his unusual sobriety she mainly thought attributable to his fondness for his "beasties." St. Crispin is not the patron saint of vowed testotallers, nor are shoemakers most zealous in the cause of alcoholic abstinence. At Banff, at least, they were a "vara drucken set;" and doubtless Mrs. Edward had good reason for rejoicing that her husband had no taste for joining in their drinking bouts. It was with no less pride than common sense that she declared, when asked what she thought of his ramblings from his home: "Weel, he took sic an interest in his beasts that I didna compleen. My man's been a sober man all his life, and he never neglecht his wark, sae I let him be."

Other night-watchers might profit if in this respect they followed in the steps of this poor shoemaker; and other night-workers might with advantage take a leaf out of his book. Sailors, coastguardmen, and gamekeepers, to say nothing of policemen, find it frequently their duty to pass the night *al fresco*, and often may be tempted to "take a drop of something just to keep oneself from freezing." A glass of gin and beer is doubtless a seductive draught, but its effects are soporific; and this is mostly the result of every spirituous stimulant. Many a vessel has been wrecked, many a smuggled keg been landed, many a pheasant has been poached, and many a pocket has been picked, through the drowsiness induced by that "little drop of something," taken "just to keep the

cold out," which Thomas Edward wisely shunned, and was steadfast in refusing.

Twice in the twelve years that followed his disastrous show at Aberdeen the poor naturalist was obliged to "draw upon his savings' bank," and sell some hundreds of the specimens he managed to collect. The first of these two sales was forced upon him when he lay disabled for a fortnight by his fall among the rocks; and to the second he was driven by a sharp attack of fever, which laid him prostrate for a month. After this he was compelled to give up his night rambles, and content himself with daylight dabbings on the shore, and delvings in the sand in search of crabs and shellfish. Having no dredge to assist him, he set traps for small crustacea by sinking old tin-kettles, and battered pots and pans filled with bits of seaweed, and placed handy for the visit which he paid them once a month. He made friends, too, with the fishermen, and was rewarded with many a discovery by carefully examining what they would carry home for him—the refuse of a catch. His children also helped him by hunting in the seaweed cast ashore after a storm, when something curious was pretty certain to turn up. Thus by slow degrees, and with small means at his command, he soon became an ardent student of the wonders of the deep; and his acute observation even in unlikely places rarely failed to find out something to repay him for the industry he gave to his research.

Of the acquaintances he made in the large family of crabs, whose society is somewhat difficult to cultivate, especially when sought for a little late in life, some notion may be gathered by a reference to the *History of Sessile-eyed Crustacea*, where his services to science are put properly on record. Among the interesting creatures which are mentioned in that book, Thomas Edward found no fewer than one hundred and seventy-seven of the catalogued crustacea in the Moray Firth; and of these at least a score were each of some new species hitherto unknown. Many other little strangers, of great interest to naturalists, he succeeded in discovering, some of which he had the honour to see christened by a classical contortion of his name. The *Conchia Edwardii* was the first that was thus celebrated; and if the *Phryxus Fusticaudatus*, which likewise he discovered, has not yet had the term "Edwardii" affixed to it, the reason may be possibly that such a tiny creature

is not considered big enough to bear a longer name.

Another fruitful source of specimens were the carcasses of fish. Many scores of curious creatures could sometimes be collected from the stomach of a codfish. Indeed, the cod may well be dubbed the alderman of the deep, so voracious is his appetite, and so omnivorous his taste. A list of the luxuries which have travelled down the lane that leads to his capacious maw may remind one of the menu of a fish-dinner at Greenwich. The catalogue comprises a huge number of little crabs and lobsters, served whole in their shells by way of tickling the palate. Then come, if not a fishy omelette, at least some eggs of fish, those of the dogfish being eaten in their transparent pod or capsule, to give them a nice crispness, like the crackling of roast pig. Next may be counted some sea-cucumbers, served in lieu of salad, with a quart or so of shrimps. Then a dainty dish of zoophytes, followed by a few sea-urchins, which seem to give a smack of cannibalism, by way of further relish. For game, there appears the skeleton of a partridge, plainly gulped down in its feathers; while a cluster of ripe beech-nuts serve for the dessert. Finally, there figures in the list of luxuries a little bit of pewter, with the fragment of some cloth, as if the glutton in his haste had swallowed his spoon and napkin while waiting for his soup.

In the year 1866 Thomas Edward was elected an associate of the Linnæan Society, an honour which, however, brought him correspondence rather than hard cash. Previously to this he had been appointed Keeper of the Banff Museum; but the pay was very little, though the honour might be great. The initials A.L.S. are doubtless of marked value in the scientific world, but to a poor shoemaker they could scarcely be so useful as plain, simple £ s. d. Of the latter, however, no grant was then conferred; and so the shoemaker and scientist was left to struggle on, earning fifteen shillings by hard labour at his last. A slender pittance this for one who had his quiver full of arrows at his back, and who must at times have found his blessedness therein a little burthensome to bear. But by unceasing toil and temperance, and the rigidest economy (wherein his worthy help-meet played most worthily her part), Thomas Edward somehow managed to maintain his family, and bring up his eleven children decently and well. Still, when his life was written, just four

years ago, he was so crippled by his rheumatism that his earnings were reduced to eight shillings a week ; and he might have fared but badly if his elder children had not been at hand to help him to keep house.

A great relief, however, came most opportunely, when most needed, to his aid. In less than two months after Dr. Smiles's book appeared, his poor, hard-working hero was honoured more substantially than he had ever been before, being royally awarded a comfortable pension of fifty pounds a year. The Premier wrote gracefully to announce the welcome grant, stating that "the Queen had been much interested in reading your biography, and is touched by your successful pursuit of natural science under all the cares and troubles of daily toil." Truly an agreeable surprise was prepared for the poor naturalist, when the postman went his rounds at Banff one winter's morning, and brought him this astounding letter, signed "Yours faithfully, with much respect, Beaconsfield."

Nor was this all ; for shortly afterwards a casket containing three hundred and thirty-three sovereigns was formally presented to him and to "his devoted wife," at a public meeting which was held at Aberdeen, with the Lord Provost in the chair. A handsome sum of money too was sent him from St. Petersburg, where no fewer than four separate translations of his life have been produced. Moreover, many English readers showed their wish to help him in his age : the Duke of Westminster among them contributing the pleasantly round sum of fifty pounds.

Who will grudge him this substantial recognition of his merits, and reward for his hard work ? Dr. Smiles may well be proud of having lent a helping hand to make his hero known, and to bring him the wherewithal to cheer his well-earned rest. Toilers such as Thomas Edward are an honour to their country, and their labours serve most usefully to show what brave and wholesome lives a love of Nature may induce, and what great knowledge may be gained by a man of scanty leisure and much paucity of means, if he be backed by patience, pluck, and perseverance.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

OUR trusty, well-beloved friend
Was homeward bound across the sea,
From lonely sojourn in far lands
He came to clasp our clasping hands,
To hear our welcome sweet ;
To bring his wanderings to an end
In this dear home with mine and me,
To make my quiet bliss complete.

"I come," he wrote (his letter lies
Before me in the sunshine fair),
"I come with heart content, to see
The joy which God hath given to thee,
My comrade true and tried ;
I fain would see it with mine eyes,
I fain would hear thyself declare
How deep thine happiness, how wide.

"I come because I long to see
The bonny English flowers a-bloom,
Because a spirit of unrest
Doth vex my lately-quiet breast
With whispers in my sleep
Of daisied meadow, breezy lea,
Of April sunshine and perfume,
Of heath-clad mountains grey and steep.

"I come because the rolling years
Have stilled the passion of my youth,
Because the rugged path of time
Hath led me up to heights sublime,

And I, who could not see
Thy first great bliss for blinding tears,
I say to-day in honest truth
God's way was best for thee, and me.

"I come to take thine hand, my friend,
To look upon thy sweet wife's face,
To see thy children fond and fair ;
To breathe again the blessed air

That fanned me at my birth ;
Until (beside thee to the end)
I go from forth my dwelling-place
To find a grave on English earth.

"I come, my friend." Ah me ! sweet wife,
What marvel that the tears run down ?
What marvel that these tender words
Smite mournfully on true heart-chorde,

Since he, whose thoughts they bear,
He, who had loved us all his life,
Who for love's sake laid down love's crown,
Hath parted from us elsewhere ?

He thought to see our happy home,
Our wedded bliss, our children dear,
He thought to see thee by my side,
Who dared not look upon my bride,
Who loved thee in his prime :
But o'er his grave, with crests of foam
The wild Atlantic billows rear
Their heads, and make a mournful chime.

He will not see this home of ours,
This little Eden all our own,
He will not bring within our door
An added blessing to love's store
Of cheerful sacrifice ;
And to the height of heavenly flowers
Our precious blossoms will have grown
Before they meet his kindly eyes.

He will not see, my sweetest wife,
Thy radiant beauty past its morn,
Nor tender traces of the tears,
The sighs and smiles, the hopes and fears,
Of wife's and mother's care.
If through the mists of failing life,
He saw thy face, it must have worn
The look that I remember there.

The April look of long ago,
When all were young and thou wast free,
And on the hawthorn-bordered way
We loitered in the glad noon-day,

Beneath a sapphire sky :
Ah, wife ! then dawned love's summer glow,
My beating heart sprang out to thee,
But my true friend went silent by.

He was the worthier of the twain,
His pulses beat as strong as mine,
He looked on thee with lover's eyes,
And never sought to win the prize,

But standing calm apart,
Smiled brotherly upon my gain,
And pressed into my cup of wine
The crushed, ripe first-fruits of his heart.

Ah, my lost friend ! that tender debt
Which we had purposed to repay,
The debt which came with sweet love's birth,
Can never be repaid on earth.
But thou hast surely found
A happy end to life's regret ;
God's Angel met thee by the way,
And thou, indeed, wast homeward bound !

LEARNING TO COOK ;

A LESSON AMONG KNIGHTS AND NOBLES.

"WYNKYN DE WORDE, in 1513, in the thinnest pamphlet, in the blackest letter, so hard to read, instructs and entreats the servers of early Tudor dinners to hand up salt and cinnamon with sparrows and throistles ; mustard and sugar with pheasants, partridges, and conies ; sauce gamelyne with heron, egret, plover, and crane ; green sauce to sodden eggs on Easter Sundays. Wynkyn de Worde, still in the thinnest pamphlet, in the blackest letter, so hard to read——"

Parisina was stopped. What was her especial programme ? she was asked—or, so to speak, her menu, since she had so much of culinary association ?

The mode of reply was unexpected.

"Observe," was the way Parisina began, referring to voluminous notes that looked at first appalling, "I am going to breakfast with you, to dine with you, to go with you into pantry, buttery, spicery, ewery, pastry, scullery, laundry, kitchen, bakehouse, brew-house, milkhouse, larder, garner, for forty-nine years. Listen. In 1478—my first year—the Company of Wax Chandlers gave a feast. It was here, in the City ; and by some rare chance what the company's cooks cooked for the feast was put into the chronicles, and it is ready for your inspection. Now, 1478—you are little likely to remember, which is the reason why I remind you of it—was the year when George of Clarence (who had been White Rose for his brother and Red Rose against his brother by turns) was imprisoned in the Tower by order of Edward the Fourth, his brother, and was drowned there in malmsey. It was a year when Edward the Fourth, this king, having two dear little boys of his own (White Roses always, poor young princes!) and some dear little girls of his own, children of his Lady Grey wife, crowned Queen Elizabeth, might have been expected to have driven murder far away from his heart—as far away, indeed, as feasting would have been driven from the hearts of London citizens, who had blood shed so freely round them, and who could see their fortress, the Tower, a dangerous near

neighbour, frowning upon them perpetually. But no. Wax Chandlers had their civic dinner on the 28th of October of that year (the malmsey had done its work on February the 18th), if no other Company had their civic dinner ; and look now at their bill of fare."

It was a neat little document, copied with Parisina's usual neatness, and it came as a gross total, and for the whole Company, to seven shillings precisely.

That it was received with archæologic reverence, as well as attention, pleased Parisina ; but she wanted more.

"Read it ! Read it !" she persisted. "It has interest beyond that of money, though money bears interest of a peculiar kind, I know. Its beauty is not only in its last line. Go through."

So it was scanned, item for item, and, with spelling modernised, and method of juxtaposition, it was : Two loins of mutton, two loins of veal, and one loin of beef, at fourpence a loin, twenty-pence ; a leg of mutton, twopence-halfpenny ; a pig, fourpence ; a capon, sixpence ; a goose, sixpence ; a coney, twopence ; a dozen of pigeons, sevenpence ; a hundred eggs, eightpence-halfpenny ; a gallon of red wine, eightpence ; and, finally, a kilderkin of ale, eightpence also.

"The loin of beef not yet knighted, you perceive," said Parisina, "and, therefore, it has no sir to it, and it can be bought for a groat. However, let me take you on five years—to 1483. It was the year when the two dear little White Rose of York boys were killed in the Tower. It was a year when coney, pigeons, comfits, marchpane, crystal jellies, were done with for these poor children ; and when pillows had been the last things that had touched their young lips, and all was over. No funeral baked-meats were put upon tables, either, for the eating of their agonised survivors, all was so sad, and sudden, and wicked ; and I cannot tell you of any. I go on instead, two years again, to 1485. In that year, Richard, the murderer and uncle of these two little smothered boys, and the brother of their drowned uncle and just dead father, was killed at the Battle of Bosworth, and Henry, who fought him, and killed him, was proclaimed Henry the Seventh, and crowned so. Now, Henry the Seventh's Chapel, in Westminster Abbey, gives noble subject for thought ; but I want to take you to two years after he did the vanquishing, to 1487. He had married as soon as he had killed ; for in those centuries those funeral

baked-meats I alluded to could so often have furnished forth marriage-tables, cold (had there been sufficient thrift in kingly kitchens), it is no wonder the thought shot so vividly into Hamlet's mind, and left his lips with such immortal bitterness. The king's bride (you are again very little likely to remember) was Elizabeth, the sister of the dear little smothered princes (this being a rough-and-ready royal recipe for making white and red roses grow on one stem; for taking away all thorns, and leaving only lovely fragrance); and at last, somewhat grudgingly, on November 25, when the young girl's first-born son, Arthur Prince of Wales, was fourteen months old, her husband had her crowned his queen, and gave what was thought to be a parsimonious banquet at her coronation."

Parisina made a pause here, indicative of extra emphasis; and she was asked if anything eminently notable were coming.

"Yes; the coronation banquet itself!" she replied, with a brave flourish. "It has heralds, squires, grooms, trumpeters, tabards, tuckets, hautbois, dulcimers, trains, crowns, huzzas, adulation, and the rest of it! So now, attention. Look!"

Here is a savoury serving as a beginning that might be effective; it is venison in paste royal. Here is mutton royal richly garnished. Here is a cold baked meat flourished. Here is pike in latymer sauce. Here are perch in jelly dipped. Here are shields of brawn in armour.

"Cut your brawne" in such a way, says Wynkyn de Worde to his carvers and servers; a way that I will show you. But 'see that there be mustarde."

Parisina was thanked.

Here is custard royal. Here are castles of jelly, in templewise made. Here are quinces baked.

"Look you have in all seasons, butter, cheese, apples, pears, nottes, plommes, grapes, dates, figs, raisins, compost green ginger, and charde quince."

Parisina was thanked again.

Here is seal in fenyn (fennel?) entirely served—that is, whole, richly. Here are lampreys in gelantine.

"Of eels and lampreys roasted, pull of the skynne, pick out the bones, put thereto vinegar and powder."

Here were many birds. Partridges, fowls (called cokks, and spelt so), pheasants, red shanks, snites (being the heath-cock, otherwise the rail), the francolin, plovers, larks ingrailed (that is arranged on the dish zig-zag, like the ingrailling of heraldry),

a swan, with chawdron, a Spanish variety of artichoke; a crane, with cretney.

"Crane hath to be hung up long in the air.' And that is not De Worde," added Parisina. "It is Sir Thomas Elyot, knight, entrusted with various delicate embassies by the second son of this banqueting king and queen. It is, too, a good and an earnest Sir Thomas Elyot, who noted food matters attentively, and wrote a Castel of Helth about them."

It was well, and the long procession up to the royal tables continued.

Here was marchpane royal. Here was sturgeon, fresh, with fennel. Here was brouet riche—brouet being a broth of milk—sometimes with chitterlings. Here were bittours, or bittrens.

"Have much pepper and ginger put to bittren, and have good old wine drank after them.' Ahem! Sir Thomas Elyot."

Here was frumentye with venison; frumentye changing, with time, into fromentie and frumenty, and being wheat, peeled and boiled. Here were capons of high goe.

"Capons, hens, and chickens, may be roasted inside of kids and lambs, saith good Sir Thomas. Is that the high go to which these coronation capons were subjected?"

High goe was haut gout, Parisina was told; it only needed a little sensible interpretation. Let her attend.

Here were carp in foile; gold foil to gild food having begun many centuries before this, and golden carp and king's feeding (of another sort) being not necessarily limited to one century of association. Here was kid reversed, a revers meaning served up upon its back, possibly because it had the curious hen and chicken filling recommended by Sir Thomas Elyot. Here was fruter monniteyne. Here was frutt formage.

"Beware of green sallettes and raw fruytes, for they will make your soverayne sick.' Ahem! Wynkyn."

But formage was fromage, from which would come the fact that frutt formage was a kind of damson-cheese, being therefore far from raw, and quite out of danger. Here were conies of high grece—grisse—meaning well-fatted, or possibly, larded. Here was rabbit sowker, i.e., souced, otherwise marinaded, with beer, salt, and vinegar.

"Look your salt be white and dry, and look your salt-cellar lid touch not the salt.' Wynkyn."

It was apt. Here was hart, powdered graunt chars.

"'Powder all fish; it maketh it good for a man.' Back again to Sir Thomas."

It was apt again. Here were creves de endence.

Parisina wanted a moment to consider. "Creves de endence," she repeated, and then she shook her head. "No," she said; "I puzzled over those when I copied them down; and I puzzle still."

There was a solution for all that, she was told. Another way to spell creves was crevices; both words meant crayfish, and d'endence was simply a miscopying in the original MS. for d'audouce, fresh water.

Here was tarte poleyn, being pullen or poulain, and all being poultry. Here was leyse damask.

It was Parisina's turn for elucidation. "Eysil or eisil," she said, "was the old word for vinegar. That, in French-English, gives leyse. To damask wine was to warm it a little to make it mantle. And though one cannot think now that mantled vinegar was a very inviting drink for this new White Rose queen, tastes have altered. Besides, my knightly cooking-master, Elyot, tells me how to make oximell; it is of one part of vinegar to two of honey, and four of water, boiled, and 'cleane skimmed with a feather;' and if we heard of crowned queens and beauteous princesses sipping oximell we should think it very appropriate and poetic!"

The notion might pass at any rate—and so might the procession. It had been stopped sufficiently.

Here was a pheasant, in train de royaill, decked out with his tail feathers, no doubt, and these resplendently embellished. Here was browes, which might have been Scotch brose (and butter), connected thoroughly with royalty some time after. Here was peacock in hakell, more recently spelt hackle, and meaning in small pieces, or as it might be put to-day, minced. Here was—

"A bit of Wynkyn! 'Embrow not the table-cloth,' as you might, you know, with minced peacock; 'but wye upon your napkin.' And 'Look your table knyves be faire pullyshed, and your spoones be cleane!'"

Here was valance baked, valance getting no translation. Here was lethe Ciprus.

"A wine, of course, bringing lethe or oblivion."

It was conceded. Here was lethe rube
"Red wine."

Conceded again. Here was jelly hippocras.

"A ha'porth of bread to so much liquor. It is time for it. Hear Wynkyn! 'Chip your soverayne's bread hot, and all other bread, let it be a day old.' And 'cut the over cruste to your soverayne, and cut the nether crust (to others), avoid the parynges, and teach the loaf no more after it is so served.'"

Here was frutt synoper, some preparation of mustard, from sinapis, the Latin. Here was fruter angeo; unexplained. Here were egrets with beorwetye; the beorwetye remaining unexplained also. Here was heronsews with his sique; heronsews being heronceaux, young herons, the word standing so in Chaucer, and his sique being, perhaps, his siege, the old term amongst fowlers for when the bird was watching at the waterside for its prey; and the dish representing thus the whole scene as a grand culinary picture or gastronomic trophy.

"And that is all, see," cried Parisina. "I drop the curtain, and you have not as much as a fume left. For the feast was but a niggardly feast, you know. There was a soteltie with writing of ballads at the end of each course, though (there were two courses); a soteltie, in Italian, sottilita, being a play of wit, some tricking or similar cunning diversion; and each course was preceded by a warner. What a warner is you shall hear at the proper date. What these particular warners were that were looked at by the sad eyes of this White Rose Elizabeth, there is no record, unhappily."

Dismissing this point with a certain half-conscious professional air, Parisina was busy the next moment turning over her papers.

"I have here," she said, in a tone to suit, "a small insurrection. It was taking place at the very moment of my banquet. My head insurrectionist was Lambert Simnel. He pretended to be Edward Plantagenet, the drowned Duke of Clarence's son, consequently of the White Rose line of royalty, and a formidable claimant for the kingship so recently seized by Henry. In sober reality he was a common baker, or the son of a baker; with a knowledge of rye-meal and rye-bread, and bread without leaven, and 'bread somewhat leavened, not too old nor too stale,' recommended by Sir Thomas Elyot; and with a knowledge of muste, and manchets, and trencher-bread, ordered by Wynkyn de Worde to be served 'after the estymacion of them that shall sit there,' and with so much knowledge also of household bread and horsbread, and even

"cake-bread made with milke and egges," as Tyndall dilates upon the delicacy in his fine folio, that if he could only come and tell us of it now, he might have his insurrection again, and again get forgiveness of it—and royal forgiveness, too—when it was all nicely quelled and over.

"That is," said Parisina, checking herself, "if Simnel could warrant that the insurrection should be without blood-spilling. Without blood-spilling it was not, though, when Henry the Seventh's cooks were roasting his egrets and boning his char, and rolling out his paste royal, and getting the sauces and spices ready for his larks, and swans, and conies. Men were killed; new men were levied to supply their places; and the expenses had to be met. As for Lambert Simnel himself, by the end of two years—by 1489—his little case had been settled comfortably. He was so little of a noble, and so much at home amongst pewter and brass pots, and hookers, and pipkins, and spatulas, and spits, that when the king, after catching him, offered him, in contempt, his life if he would be a scullion in his kitchen, he accepted the post gratefully, and handled the sand and soap and oil and scrubbing-brushes with so much skill and will, that he finally got promotion. But in respect of the expenses of all of this, there was obliged to be a call for taxes. The Yorkshire people (amongst others) grumbled at the imposition of these; flew to arms rather than pay; besieged Coxlodge, a castle the Earl of Northumberland was then living in, because the earl, to support his king, declared he meant to make them pay; and they hustled this poor gentleman (Hotspur's great grandson; think of it!), and they resisted him, and fought him and his retainers, and he was mercilessly killed."

There came another pause, significant of emphasis. It lasted as long perhaps as Parisina would have been basting a roasting bittern with a Tudor ladle (and probably giving a short lecture, in, to the turnspit), and then she was ready again.

"After thy purs maynteyne thy fare,
Tyme is to spende, tyme is to spare,"

she read from a thin strip of paper arranged in the manner of a scroll.

"That," she said explanatorily, "was one of two mottoes painted up, and gilded up, in the library of this dead earl, at another of his castles, Leconfield; and in it is to be found the spirit that would have

been abroad in his kitchens. Here is another of these mottoes:

"The pore people gladly feede;
Help wretches in their need."

And here is yet another, or part of it:

"A full stomake a hony-come regardeth nothyng,
But a soure morsell is sweet where hunger is con-strayninge."

And here is a part of yet one more:

"Curiously and conningly I can kerve,
And with assured maner at the table serve;"

and I propose going into the kitchens lighted up with such dainty devices of illustration, and taking the last half of this cooking lesson from what there was there, for the early Tudor world to see."

"I shall be short, of course," she prefaced. "And I go on forthwith. This earl, when he was killed, left seven little children; the eldest—poor wondering little people!—only twelve years old. This one—Henry Algernon Percy, become then in succession the fifth earl, and born one year before my Wax-Chandler's Feast—had strict integrity and acute parts; and you, and I, and the whole English world, owe a great deal, in a culinary sense, to this and to the long years he passed as master, and yet in his minority. 'Buy capons,' he said to his people when he was old enough to rule them, saying it in antiquated form that I have altered, 'Buy capons for the first table (his own) if they can be bought, leap, for twopence, and then let them be fattened in my poultry. Buy pigs also,' he said; 'buy bacon-flitches; buy geese; buy mallards; buy woodcock, wypes (the lapwing), sea-gulls, jays, quails, curlews, sholards, tern, widgeon, knots, dottrell; buy bustard.'"

"Let a bustard be fattened, then kept for two days hungered; then let him be killed, and drawn, and hung up long, and roasted; and let him be baked."

"Quite right," laughed Parisina. "That is my note of what Sir Thomas Elyot says on bustard, true enough; only I didn't say that anybody but myself has a right to read it! However, let it pass. 'Buy chickens,' said my fifth earl, 'if you can buy them for a halfpenny. Buy pigeons, three of them for a penny. Buy cranes if it be Christmas, and if they be wanted for my own mess; but only give for them fifteen pence each. Buy herons for my own mess also, at a shilling. Buy teal, when none other wildfowl can be gotten, and when they cost but a penny. Buy peacocks, but never a pea-hen. Buy larks.'"

"Lark broth, see that ye get it; it hath great virtue in colic."

"My notes on Sir Thomas again! Well, let us continue: 'Buy larks, and buy other small birds, if they be twelve of them for a penny; buy large birds also;' all of these being tree birds take notice, and not worth so much as a name, and being only besides for the chamberlains' and stewards' tables; 'if these large birds be four of them for the same money. Buy hens at twopence.'"

"The gizzards of hens and of geese, being fat with bran and milk, and being well sodden, or ground sharply into powder, make good juice, and conduce heartily to health."

"Once more! Dear, dear! 'Buy no swans; there be enow of them on the waters of my own parks. Buy plovers if at a penny. But see that you buy all these at first-hand, and not of poulterers; because the poulterers of Hemmingburgh and Clyff have had great advantage of me yearly in the selling of conies and wildfowl, and this must be ended.'"

"Now, did you notice," asked Parisina, "this advantage (which is prettily put) of these Yorkshire poulterers? It is from such an expression, and from others like it, that I am enabled to say that we owe all of these cooking particulars to the young earl's minority. The country was in wretched disorder. Another pretender rose, Perkin Warbeck; declaring himself to be the younger of the smothered princes, never smothered at all. There was rebellion in this shire, and rebellion in that shire, causing bloodshed everywhere, and was that a time when the relatives and guardians of the young Percy could do their guardianship fitly? It was not; and there was waste and senseless profusion, and lavish squandering, and this Yorkshire overcharging; and the earl was angry. 'Have sea-pies,' he said to his servants, at that time when he was old enough to rule them; 'but have them at the principal feasts, and at none other times. Let the leaves of trencher bread be larger than the loaves of household bread; and let the chippings of all bread serve for the feeding of my hounds. Let there be no herbs bought, seeing that the cooks have enow of herbs growing in my own gardens.'"

"Suckory, sow-thistle, and dent-de-lyon, herb and root, are to be boiled with fresh meat. With beans boil onions; it will make them less noyful. Boil garlic

in milk. Of sorrel, chew the leaves and suck the juice; brasse the seeds also, and drink them with wine."

Parisina was bright with enjoyment.

"Running away with my Elyot again," she cried, "as if I myself had no claim to it! Is it not good instruction though? And is it not interesting to know that my fifth earl had all of these vegetables planted in his gardens—together with borage, betany, cowslips, scabious, woodbine, elder-flower, endive, tansy, balm, hart's-tongue, parsley, langue-de-boeuf, columbine? That he had more, too, as we know; for he mentions each by name; and yet found that his henchman and his underlings would buy them, and put him to their charge and cost? Well, this fifth earl was fast developing into a man whilst all this was going on. By 1497 he was twenty years of age; he was arranging for his marriage with Catherine Spenser, granddaughter of Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, second cousin to his king; and young as he was, he was marching down to Blackheath with troops, and servants, and retainers, to lead these into that Blackheath Battle that settled Perkin Warbeck's pretensions to the crown for ever. For all of this, and, indeed, on the very account of all of this, household matters were still in no way of being mended at his castle, and the waste went on. His folk bought bread, and beer, and mustard ready made, which made him say, when that peaceful time came, that he would be at the head of matters himself, 'Let none of this be done; but bake my bread in my own ovens, making it of meal as it cometh from the mill; and brew my beer in my own brew-houses; and make my mustard within my own walls, and see that one be provided to be groom of the scullery that can make it. Let vinegar be made of my broken wines,' too, said this awaked earl. 'Buy charcoal as well as sea-coal, because the smoke of the sea-coal will hurt my arms when it is hung; get faggots likewise, and get great wood, because coal will not burn its best without wood be mixed with it. Give twenty shillings, not less, nor more, to the cooks on Easter Sunday. These were four of them; and they slept two in a bed. 'Bring all keys of all offices up into my counting-house every day when the latter dinner is done; let them be fetched again at three to serve out the drinkings (the beers, and so on, answering to our tea); and let them be brought up again after that, and remain up all night until the morning. Buy

white herring if they be at ten shillings the barrel."

"Open white herring by the back, pick out the bones and the roe, and see there be mustard."

"Yes; that is Wynkyn de Worde on that point, as I had made the quotation. So also, see! Wynkyn mentions baked herring. 'Lay baked herring whole upon your sovereign's trencher,' is his order; though why baked bones are not to be taken out, and why white bones are, I can give no Plantagenet or Tudor reason.

"But I must now take you," continued Parisina, "four years farther, to 1501. My earl was down in a superbly-decorated barge in the River Thames, at Blackwall; a gallant and courtly noble of twenty-four years of age, as rich as the richest, as honoured as the most honoured, as good as the best. It was because there was a marriage at Court. Arthur, the little prince who had been fourteen months old when his White Rose mother, Elizabeth, had sat at her coronation banquet, had now had his fifteenth birthday, and the next thing he was to have was—a bride. The lady had come. She had landed at Plymouth on the 4th of October. She was a Spaniard, a fair girl of eighteen, a rich heiress; she was, in fact, Katharine, that famed daughter of the famed Ferdinand and Isabella, who will never die in English history and who was to be met at the entrance to London royally, that she might be royally conducted to London's Tower. There was no earl more fitting than my fifth earl to do this act of graceful homage, and so, with others of the same degree, he did it. The princess's galley hove in sight on the 12th of November; the nobles' barges crowded round it; there were flourishings, greetings, English huzzas, and English eatings. The marriage was two days afterwards at St. Paul's, and, this service over, my fifth earl might go home. Alas! the Court was heavy with a funeral when all things were prepared for this, and it was ready to be done. Arthur was dead. This boy-bridegroom, this White Rose Elizabeth's first-born, this nephew of Richard the Third's nephews, left his bride after five months' marriage his widow, and it seemed as if every young English prince came from a poisoned tree, and was swiftly to be blasted. But a bride had taken my fifth earl down to the south, so a bride was to be my fifth earl's especial business in going from the south back. This new

lady was Margaret, the dead young Arthur's young sister. She was to marry James, the King of Scotland. She was to be escorted with befitting ceremony northward to the marrying; and in 1504, two years after, comes the third banquet I have on my notes to give you."

There was little time, came a hasty intimation.

"I know," cried Parisina, taking it up as hastily, "and that is why I am going to tell you only of the banquet's warner. It consisted of a 'round boorde of eight panes (bread), with eight towers embattled and made with flowers.' There was 'standynge on every tower a bedil in his habite, with his staffe, and in the same boorde, first the king syttinge in his Parliament, with his lordis about hym in their robes' (my fifth earl one of his lordis), and also Saint William like an archbishop at the king's right hand. The Chancellor of Oxford was on a 'boorde' also, and on the third board, highest of all, 'the Holy Ghost appeared, with bryght beames proceeding from hym of the gyftes of grace towards the lord of the feaste.'"

In short, it was put to Parisina that a Twelfth-cake was the dwindled remainder of a warner, the chalk toy queens, and kings, and knights, and lovers, with mottoes concealed somewhere in their chalk bodies, being small bedils and chancellors of Tudor entertainments, with their meaning not known and gone.

"Precisely," cried Parisina, adopting the suggestion. "However, let me just go with my fifth earl again into his kitchen for a final order, and then this lesson closes. 'Give me for my breakfast,' said this noble instructor, 'and give my lady, at our own board, in Lent, a loaf of bread in trenchers, two manchets, a quart each of beer and wine, two pieces of saltfish, six baked herring, four white ditto, or else a dish of sprats. Give us, on flesh days, in addition, a chine of mutton, or else a chine of beef, boiled; on Saturdays a dish of buttered eggs; on scrambling days salt salmon and slices of turbot, and a dish of flounders baked, or a dish of fried smelts. Give to my two eldest sons only half a loaf, and only one manchet, and but a pottle of beer and no wine; and give them a dish of butter, a piece of salt-fish, a dish of sprats, and three white herrings. Give to the poor on each Maunday Thursday, was the accurate regulation, 'loaves of bread, and garments, and hose, and pieces of money, one for each year that I have lived, and one for each

year that my lady hath lived, and one for each year that each of my little children have lived.' Give five hundred other things with the same order and the same method, the same wise and kindly precision; for my fifth earl was going a dangerous journey. He was only thirty-five years old, courtly and gallant and generous and superb; but he had seen Henry the Seventh dead; he had seen Henry the Eighth crowned; and now, in 1512, Terouaine, in France, was to be besieged, and he was to be one of the besiegers. He was leaving five very young children; and would he ever come home? Busily preparing for his journey, dangerous as it was, difficult as it was, there were tailors making him an arming doublet of crimson satin, with a French stitch; and a green one; and a white one, quilted; and a second white one, quilted likewise; and making him a gaber-dine of russet velvet, trimmed with green cloth of gold; and riding-coats, and cloaks, and frocks; and he himself, busily preparing for his journey, remembering the wild waste there had been when he was a little orphan earl, was having drawn up for his household a series of strict and instructive rules. It is these from which I have taken my lesson; and though my earl was not killed at Terouaine, but returned safely, and went to France again for that famous meeting at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 (where the Katharine he had met at Blackwall was his new king's wife and magnificently treated travelling-companion), and though he lived till 1527, being then only fifty years old, was I not right in saying that we owe this peep into his kitchens to his having been a minor, and to his having the desire to save his little son from a minor's evil consequences?"

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY R. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXI. THE WRITING IN THE BIBLE.

"It is a good thing I thought of concealing what I write between the pages of my Bible, for the woman who is given to me as a companion continues to watch my movements in an extraordinary manner. I asked her this morning whether she was paid to do it, and she replied, with detestable smiles, that she was only doing what was for my good. This means

so much that I shall speak to Harold about it.

* * * *

"I have spoken to Harold. I told him that the woman was watching me. He said surely not, and seemed to ask it as a question. I told him that I saw her searching my clothes in the middle of the night, when she supposed me to be asleep. He said that was sufficient; the woman should be discharged; and added: "If you wish it." When I replied that she made me feel uncomfortable, he said that he would send her away immediately. "Is there anything else you wish?" he asked. I answered, "Yes, I want my sister Marguerite." A strange look of remonstrance came into his face—it is a handsome face, and no man, with the exception of my father, has ever behaved to me with so much gentleness—as he said, "I will do everything in my power; my only concern is that you shall be happy." He asked me, then, if I could not be happy without my sister. Happy without you, Marguerite! My tears answered him. "Write," he said, "to Marguerite; do not conceal your thoughts; tell her that she is necessary to your happiness, and beg her to come to you at once. "You know where she is, then," I said; "there is no occasion to write. Let me go to her." He answered that he did not know where you were, or he would take me to you; that he would send a messenger with the letter to where he believed my master to be, and that the messenger himself should put his answer in my hands. He called a servant, and gave him instructions in my hearing, and a few moments after my letter was written, I saw, from my window, the man galloping away. It is all so confusing that I do not know what to think.

* * * *

"The woman has gone. She said some bitter strange things to me before she left. She reproached me for having been the cause of her losing a good service, and said she knew well enough the reason why I wished to get rid of her. "You will live to repent it," she said; "I would have protected you." She was not allowed to say more, for one of Harold's servants, coming in at the time, ordered her to be careful with her tongue. "My master is not to be trifled with," said the servant. "I know it," replied the woman, and turning to me said, with a sneering smile, "And so will you, my fine lady."

"What did she mean when she said

she would have protected me? Protect me from whom?

"Harold sent to know whether he might come and see me; he never visits me in my room without asking permission. I sent word back that he could come if he wished.

"His manners resemble those of my dear father; they are the manners of a polished gentleman. He is really one. "You will feel lonely," he said, "without a companion of your own sex. Shall we find you one until Marguerite returns?" How grateful I was for his considerate attention! I accepted it gladly, and he then told me that a young woman was waiting for my approval. He went to the door and called her—a bright young creature—younger than I, whom I received gladly. Her name is Beatrice. "So now," said Harold gaily, "we shall live happy ever afterwards."

"A fortnight has passed since the man was sent with my letter to Marguerite. Daily have I asked Harold about him, and the only answer I receive is that he has not returned. Has Marguerite forgotten me? Had she sought me, surely she could have found me. There has been no secrecy in our movements. I find some comfort in that reflection; we have travelled by the most frequented roads, and have stopped at the largest hotels. I have been entirely free. When Harold has had cause to suppose that I suspected him he has said: "Child, if there is any person you think you can trust better than you trust me, go to him; I shall not detain you, although I shall grieve to say good-bye. If you and Marguerite were together, you would not hesitate to accept me as your friend." "No, indeed," I have replied, with regret that I should have caused him pain, "but then it would be different." "It would be really different," he has said; "but being alone, as you are, knowing no one, and without friends, is all the more reason why you should place faith in a gentleman of whom you could not ask a service he would not be eager to perform." I cannot but believe him; indeed, situated as I am, I should be helpless without him.

"Reading over what I have written, my heart aches to find that in the last few lines I have thrown out a reproach against Marguerite. Forgive me, beloved sister! Too well do I know your truth, your faithfulness! That I should throw a doubt upon you reflects shame upon me. You could not forget me; nor can I you. Wherever

you are may happiness and peace of mind be yours. I pray for you day and night!

"At noon Beatrice brought me a message from Harold, requesting me to go to him; his messenger had returned. I ran to him so quickly that I almost fainted from the rapid beating of my heart. Harold caught me in his arms, and held me till I recovered. From his face, which was almost as white as my own, I knew that the news he had to tell me was bad news. "Let me go," I said faintly, "and tell me the worst at once." But when he released me I trembled so that I could scarcely stand; Harold assisted me to a seat, and leant over me. I was almost afraid to speak, and my fears grew stronger with every moment of silence. "Is Marguerite dead?" I whispered. "We do not know that," replied Harold; "all that we can learn is that the man you called your master has left the country, and has taken Marguerite with him. It is impossible to ascertain what part of the world they have gone to." I seemed to hear in the air the words, "Marguerite is lost to you; you will never see her more!" Tears streamed from my eyes, and almost blinded me, and when I could see, Harold was kneeling at my feet. "It breaks my heart," he said, "to see you in such grief. What can I do to comfort you?" "Find Marguerite," I sobbed; "restore my sister to me." "If it is in man's power," he replied, "it shall be done. I swear it, by this kiss on your white hand!" I wiped the tears from my eyes, and looked into his face; truth and honesty seemed to dwell there, but there was also an expression in it which brought blushes to my cheek. Ah, Marguerite! Would that you were here to counsel me! I am like a child groping in the dark, and I have no one in the world to depend upon but Harold.

"Harold tells me he has sent out three messengers in different directions, to endeavour to track my master, and he begs me in the meantime to be easier in my mind; in every possible way he strives to make the hours pass quickly. One thing he said which does not please me: "It is good sometimes to be able to forget." I asked him if he meant it would be good for me to forget Marguerite. He answered: "Heaven forbid; but that it were wiser not to allow our thoughts to dwell so constantly upon one subject, if it gave us pain; and that we should not nurse our

troubles." He said a great deal more to the same effect, and called it philosophy. I can find no comfort in it.

"Harold entreated me to go out more, and it seemed so ungrateful in me to say No, again and again to everything he proposes, that I have consented to go to a theatre one evening this week. It is but a small thing to do in return for all his kindness.

* * * *

"I have just come from the theatre. The moment we entered our hotel, Harold and I, Beatrice my maid following us, I wished Harold good-night, and hurried to my room. Beatrice waited to help me undress; I said I did not require her assistance, and sent her to bed; her room is next to mine.

"In the evening a dressmaker brought two large boxes into my room, a present from Harold. She opened them, and laid out gloves, and shoes, and opera-cloak, and the most beautiful dress I ever beheld; it was altogether so sweet and attractive that I trembled to look at it, and longed to put it on, and at the same time felt as though my longing were a sin. When I promised Harold to accompany him to the theatre. I did not think I should be compelled to dress so grandly. The dressmaker pointed out to me the beauties of this beautiful costume, the colours of which are what best become me. I asked her whether it would fit me, and she said that she had studied my figure, and that Beatrice had lent her a common dress of mine which had served as a guide. Time was flying, and Harold, I knew, would presently be waiting for me. I allowed the woman to dress me, and Beatrice, who was full of innocent admiration, arranged my hair, and sighed over me in ecstasy. I thought of the times when you, my darling Marguerite, used to take pride in decorating me, and of your fond words and loving ways as you proceeded in your task. Ah! you loved your poor sister too well; you cared not for yourself. This was for Clarice; that was for Clarice; Marguerite wanted nothing—nothing but love! I gave you that, dear! but I can see now how selfish I was in comparison with you.

"My thoughts were still dwelling upon you when Beatrice and the dressmaker completed their task. I looked at myself in the glass.

"I was almost ashamed of the pleasure I experienced, and felt as though my appearance were a wrong to you, dear Marguerite. But you would not have thought

so; you would have taken a greater pride in me than I did in myself. Why should I deceive myself or you? I could not help feeling delighted, and the only thing I wanted in the world to make me completely happy was that you could see me, and kiss me, and whisper in my ear those sweet wishes for my future which I used to repeat to myself over and over again. My future! what will it be like? And yours, Marguerite! What will yours be?

"It was time for me to go to Harold; his eyes seemed as though they would devour me when I presented myself. "You are dressed in a befitting manner, Clarice," he said; "you do me great honour." And I had never seen Harold look so well.

"It was to the opera-house we went. The theatre was crowded. The dresses of the ladies, the lights, the animation of every person, who behaved as though there were no unhappiness in the world, no misery, no poverty, no sorrow, no injustice. I did not think of this at the time; it comes into my head only now. I thought only of the wonderful picture around me.

"Harold and I were alone in the box, sitting in full view of the house. People stared at us from every part. "You are the prettiest flower in the bouquet," Harold whispered, and bowed to this person and that, and asked me whether I had any objection to his receiving the visits of his friends. What objection could I have? The box was his, and I but a poor girl, almost like the heroine of the opera, a gypsy, whose dress at one time was as grand but not so pretty as mine. How beautifully she sang! And how the audience applauded her! Her voice was like a nightingale's, but not sweeter than yours, Marguerite. Never, never was a voice as sweet as my dear sister Marguerite's!

"I lost myself in the pleasure of the night; I felt as though I had drunk wine which intensified almost into pain the sense of enjoyment.

"Many of Harold's friends came into the box; some of them are artists; Harold himself is one, he says. He asked me in a whisper whether he should introduce me to his friends by my name, and I said no. I cannot tell why I did not wish it to be made common. He mentioned the names of his friends, but I did not distinctly hear one of them. They paid me a thousand compliments; a queen could not have received greater attention.

"The night passed quickly; the curtain

fell. Harold hurried me out of the box into the carriage. Beatrice was there with a lovely fur cloak which she fastened round my neck.

"I leant back, and closed my eyes, and as we drove to the hotel Harold held my hand in his. I tried to withdraw it, but he would not let me. He hoped it had been a pleasant evening, he said; I answered, Yes, and my voice seemed to die away in a whisper.

"So now I have written all that passed; I have done no wrong, and yet I am oppressed by a feeling of deep uneasiness. More than ever do I need your presence and your counsel, my dear sister; never more than now, never more than now!

"It seems as if I dared not write my thoughts. I push them from me.

"Suppose I ran away from this great hotel this very night, this very moment. In which direction should I fly? Who would come forward and help me? Do I not remember the night upon which Marguerite and I attempted to escape from our master? Even Marguerite, strong and brave as she is, had to give up the attempt in despair. And I, weak and irresolute as I am, with no one to guide me—could I expect to succeed where Marguerite failed?

"Of what, then, am I afraid? Next to Marguerite and my dear dead father, no man or woman in the world has behaved so kindly and with so much consideration as Harold has done. Do I fear his gentleness? Would it be better that he should beat and starve me, than that he should strive by every means in his power to please and amuse me? Then, indeed, if he were harsh to me, and made me feel my dependent position, I should have cause for tears; but as it is, treated as a lady—Clarice, you are ungrateful.

"Scattered about the room are the clothes and the flowers I have worn to-night. Marguerite, if she were to come in suddenly, would scarcely believe they were mine; but she would be glad. It was what she always wished for me. Why, then, should I not be glad? I will go to bed now, and pray. All will be well in time—all is well! Father, that art in Heaven! my trust is in Thee! Good night, dear, dear Marguerite!

* * * * *

"I have been very uneasy in my mind. Until an hour ago I had not seen Harold for three days. He did not send me word or message. I asked Beatrice if

she saw him, and Beatrice said Yes, and that he always enquired after me? Did he not wish to see me? I asked; and Beatrice answered that he did not express the wish. Every day Beatrice and I have walked out, and no person has accosted or molested us. In the hotel I am waited upon by servants who obey my slightest word. This absolute liberty jarred upon me, and Harold's avoidance of me made me uneasy. I sent Beatrice with a message to him, asking if he would see me; she returned immediately, and said that Harold was waiting for me. When I entered his study my resolution left me; I hardly knew what to say to him. Still I mustered courage to ask if I had offended him. "Child," he answered, taking my hand; "it is I who feared I had offended you." "In what way?" I asked. "In no way," he answered, in a tone which seemed to express that a weight was lifted off his mind; "if you cannot tell, I have been torturing myself unnecessarily. And we are really friends?" "Yes," I replied, but even as I spoke my voice deserted me again. Then he went on to tell me that he felt it a kind of reproach upon himself that he had been unable to obtain news of Marguerite, and that he feared it would take a longer time to find her than he expected. He spoke of other things, and I listened in silence; he said it was necessary that he should pay a visit to an estate a hundred miles away. "What will become of me?" I thought. It was almost as if he divined what was passing in my mind, for he said that he had been thinking of me, and considering what was best to be done. Near his estate, to attend to which would occupy some months of his time, was a pretty cottage which he said I could live in if I wished, with Beatrice and another servant or two; that if I accepted it would enable him to communicate to me without delay what news he might obtain of Marguerite. "It might happen," he said, "that one of my messengers will return with Marguerite, and then, knowing where you were, I could bring her to you at once." The joy of this possibility caused me instantly to accept his offer, and I thanked him with tears in my eyes. "What have I done to deserve such kindness?" I asked. He held my two hands, and looked down into my face. "Child," he said, "you are never absent from my thoughts."

* * * * *

"I have been in Harold's pretty cottage for a week. It is a most beautiful place, with a lovely garden around it; if

Marguerite were with me I could live happily here all my life.

"Everything was ready when we arrived; Harold must have seen to it beforehand. When I said as much to him he smiled, and said he hoped he had been able to please me. "You are queen here," he said. "Will you give me lodgment for the night?" "Indeed," I said, laughing, and much perplexed, "I know nothing of the place. It is yours." "Nay," he said, "I assure you it is your own, to rule in as you please, and although I do not know where to find a roof for my head this night, I will not stay unless you bid me stay." "Of course you may stay," I said; "but who will show me what to do?" "There is a housekeeper here," he said, and he called a woman by name, an elderly woman, who showed me over the house, and pointed out spare rooms, in one of which Harold could sleep. My bedroom is the sweetest I have ever slept in; it has windows on two sides, and seems to be embosomed in a very bower of flowers.

"Harold left me the next morning, but came again in the evening to see how I was getting on. I was very excited, I had made so many discoveries during the day. There are stables and a little carriage, with a pair of ponies, and two saddle-horses. A groom explained that the ponies were for me to drive, and one of the saddle-horses was for me; the other was Harold's. Two gardeners were busy in the garden. At the end of the garden is a streamlet, and a pretty bridge over it leads into the woods. It is like a fairy house. I cannot believe that it is mine, but Harold assures me repeatedly that it is so, and that if I like he will give me what he calls deeds. I told him I did not want them; that I

was happy as I was. He caught at my words. "And are you really happy at length?" he asked. Then, Marguerite, I thought of you, whom I reproach myself for forgetting sometimes, and I turned my head in sadness away.

* * * *

"Harold comes daily. Yesterday was Sunday, and he came early with a friend. Within a mile of this fairy cottage is a village church, and I was ready dressed for the morning service when Harold and his friend rode up. I told them I was going to church, and asked them to accompany me; they consented, laughing, saying they had had no such intention in their minds. We walked there, and our appearance excited the wonderment of the country people who stared at us all through the service. Then for the first time I felt that a great change had come over me. When my father was alive, and afterwards, when Marguerite and I were travelling with our master from village to village, I knew that I belonged to the people. I belong to them no longer; that is plain from their bearing towards me. It pains me to think that a tie in which there was so much that was pleasant is broken. The minister, an old man with white hair, paid no more attention to us than he did to the poorer members of his flock. We stood outside by the church door, observing the people who, when they left the church, wended their way homewards in different directions. The last to come out was the minister. He turned his benevolent eyes upon us. Harold and his friend bowed; he returned their salutation, and perceiving that they evinced a desire to enter into conversation with him, waited a little until they spoke.

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXII. THE BRAKE COUNTRY.

"WHAT does your father mean to do about Trumpington Wood?" That was the first word from Lord Chiltern after he had shaken hands with his guest.

"Isn't it all right yet?"

"All right? No! How can a wood like that be all right without a man about the place who knows anything of the nature of a fox? In your grandfather's time——"

"My great-uncle, you mean."

"Well; your great-uncle!—they used to trap the foxes there. There was a fellow named Fothergill who used to come there for shooting. Now it is worse than ever. Nobody shoots there because there is nothing to shoot. There isn't a keeper. Every scamp is allowed to go where he pleases, and of course there isn't a fox in the whole place. My huntsman laughs at me when I ask him to draw it." As the indignant Master of the Brake Hounds said this the very fire flashed from his eyes.

"My dear," said Lady Chiltern expostulating, "Lord Silverbridge hasn't been in the house above half an hour."

"What does that matter? When a thing has to be said it had better be said at once."

Phineas Finn was staying at Harrington with his intimate friends the Chilterns, as were also a certain Mr. and Mrs. Maule, both of whom were addicted to hunting—the lady, whose maiden name had been Palliser, being a cousin to Lord Silverbridge. On that day also a certain Mr.

and Mrs. Spooner dined at Harrington. Mr. and Mrs. Spooner were both very much given to hunting, as seemed to be necessarily the case with everybody admitted to that house. Mr. Spooner was a gentleman who might be on the wrong side of fifty, with a red nose, very vigorous, and submissive in regard to all things but port-wine. His wife was perhaps something more than half his age, a stout, hard-riding handsome woman. She had been the penniless daughter of a retired officer—but yet had managed to ride on whatever animal anyone would lend her. Then Mr. Spooner, who had for many years been part and parcel of the Brake hunt, and who was much in want of a wife, had, luckily for her, cast his eyes upon Miss Leatherside. It was thought that upon the whole she made him a good wife. She hunted four days a week, and he could afford to keep horses for her. She never flirted, and wanted no one to open gates. Tom Spooner himself was not always so forward as he used to be; but his wife was always there and would tell him all that he did not see himself. And she was a good housewife, taking care that nothing should be spent lavishly, except upon the stable. Of him, too, and of his health, she was careful, never scrupling to say a word in season when he was likely to hurt himself, either among the fences or among the decanters. "You ain't so young as you were, Tom. Don't think of doing it." This she would say to him with a loud voice, when she would find him pausing at a fence. Then she would hop over herself, and he would go round. She was "quite a providence to him," as her mother, old Mrs. Leatherside, would say.

She was hardly the woman that one

would have expected to meet as a friend in the drawing-room of Lady Chiltern. Lord Chiltern was perhaps a little rough, but Lady Chiltern was all that a mother, a wife, and a lady ought to be. She probably felt that some little apology had to be made for Mrs. Spooner. "I hope you like hunting," she said to Silverbridge.

"Best of all things," said he enthusiastically.

"Because, you know, this is Castle Nimrod, in which nothing is allowed to interfere with the one great business of life."

"It's like that; is it?"

"Quite like that. Lord Chiltern has taken up hunting as his duty in life, and he does it with his might and main. Not to have a good day is a misery to him; not for himself, but because he feels that he is responsible. We had one blank day last year, and I thought that he never would recover it. It was that unfortunate Trumpington Wood."

"How he will hate me!"

"Not if you will praise the hounds judiciously. And then there is a Mr. Spooner coming here to-night. He is the first-lieutenant. He understands all about the foxes, and all about the farmers. He has got a wife."

"Does she understand anything?"

"She understands him. She is coming too. They have not been married long, and he never goes anywhere without her."

"Does she ride?"

"Well; yes. I never go out myself now, because I have so much of it all at home. But I fancy she does ride a good deal. She will talk hunting too. If Chiltern were to leave the country I think they ought to make her master. Perhaps you'll think her rather odd; but really she is a very good woman."

"I am sure I shall like her."

"I hope you will. You know Mr. Finn. He is here. He and my husband are very old friends. And Adelaide Maule is your cousin. She hunts too. And so does Mr. Maule—only not quite so energetically. I think that is all we shall have."

Immediately after that all the guests came in at once, and a discussion was heard as they were passing through the hall.

"No; that wasn't it," said Mrs. Spooner loudly. "I don't care what Dick said."

Dick Rabbit was the first whip, and seemed to have been much exercised with the matter now under dispute.

"The fox never went into Grobby Gorse

at all. I was there, and saw Sappho give him a line down the bank."

"I think he must have gone into the gorse, my dear," said her husband. "The earth was open, you know."

"I tell you she didn't. You weren't there, and you can't know. I'm sure it was a vixen by her running. We ought to have killed that fox, my lord." Then Mrs. Spooner made her obeisance to her hostess. Perhaps she was rather slow in doing this, but the greatness of the subject had been the cause. These are matters so important, that the ordinary civilities of the world should not stand in their way.

"What do you say, Chiltern?" asked the husband.

"I say that Mrs. Spooner isn't very often wrong, and that Dick Rabbit isn't very often right, about a fox."

"It was a pretty run," said Phineas.

"Just thirty-four minutes," said Mr. Spooner.

"Thirty-two up to Grobby Gorse," asserted Mrs. Spooner. "The hounds never hunted a yard after that. Dick hurried them into the gorse, and the old hound wouldn't stick to his line when she found that no one believed her."

This was on a Monday evening, and the Brake hounds went out generally five days a week.

"You'll hunt to-morrow, I suppose," Lady Chiltern said to Silverbridge.

"I hope so."

"You must hunt to-morrow. Indeed, there is nothing else to do. Chiltern has taken such a dislike to shooting men, that he won't shoot pheasants himself. We don't hunt on Wednesdays or Sundays, and then everybody lies in bed. Here is Mr. Maule, he lies in bed on other mornings as well, and spends the rest of his day riding about the country looking for the hounds."

"Does he ever find them?"

"What did become of you all to-day?" said Mr. Maule, as he took his place at the dinner-table. "You can't have drawn any of the coverts regularly."

"Then we found our foxes without drawing them," said the master.

"We chopped one at Bromleys," said Mr. Spooner.

"I went there."

"Then you ought to have known better," said Mrs. Spooner. "When a man loses the hounds in that country, he ought to go direct to Brachett's Wood. If you had come on to Brachett's, you'd have seen as

good a thirty-two minutes as ever you wished to ride." When the ladies went out of the room Mrs. Spooner gave a parting word of advice to her husband and to the host. "Now, Tom, don't you drink port wine. Lord Chiltern, look after him, and don't let him have port wine."

Then there began an altogether different phase of hunting conversation. As long as the ladies were there it was all very well to talk of hunting as an amusement, good sport, a thirty minutes or so, the delight of having a friend in a ditch, or the glory of a stiff-built rail, were fitting subjects for a lighter hour. But now the business of the night was to begin. The difficulties, the enmities, the precautions, the resolutions, the resources of the Brake hunt were to be discussed. And from thence the conversation of these devotees strayed away to the perils at large to which hunting in these modern days is subjected; not the perils of broken necks and crushed ribs, which can be reduced to an average, and so an end made of that small matter; but the perils from outsiders, the perils from new-fangled prejudices, the perils from more modern sports, the perils from over-cultivation, the perils from extended population, the perils from increasing railroads, the perils from literary ignorances, the perils from intruding cads, the perils from indifferent magnates—the Duke of Omnium, for instance—and that peril of perils, the peril of decrease of funds and increase of expenditure! The jaunty gentleman who puts on his dainty breeches and his pair of boots, and on his single horse rides out on a pleasant morning to some neighbouring meet, thinking himself a sportsman, has but a faint idea of the troubles which a few staunch workmen endure in order that he may not be made to think that his boots, and his breeches, and his horse have been in vain.

A word or two further was at first said about that unfortunate wood for which Silverbridge at the present felt himself responsible. Finn said that he was sure the duke would look to it, if Silverbridge would mention it. Chiltern simply groaned. Silverbridge said nothing, remembering how many troubles he had on hand at this moment. Then by degrees their solicitude worked itself round to the cares of a neighbouring hunt. The A.R.U. had lost their master. One Captain Glomax was going, and the county had been driven to the necessity of advertising for a successor. "When hunting comes to that," said Lord

Chiltern, "one begins to think that it is in a bad way." It may always be observed that when hunting men speak seriously of their sport, they speak despondingly. Everything is going wrong. Perhaps the same thing may be remarked in other pursuits. Farmers are generally on the verge of ruin. Trade is always bad. The Church is in danger. The House of Lords isn't worth a dozen years' purchase. The throne totters.

"An itinerant master with a carpet-bag never can carry on a country," said Mr. Spooner.

"You ought really to have a gentleman of property in the county," said Lord Chiltern, in a self-deprecating tone. His father's acres lay elsewhere.

"It should be someone who has a real stake in the country," replied Mr. Spooner, "whom the farmers can respect. Glomax understood hunting no doubt, but the farmers didn't care for him. If you don't have the farmers with you you can't have hunting." Then he filled a glass of port.

"If you don't approve of Glomax, what do you think of a man like Major Tifto?" asked Mr. Maule.

"That was in the Runnymede," said Spooner contemptuously.

"Who is Major Tifto?" asked Lord Chiltern.

"He is the man," said Silverbridge boldly, "who owned Prime Minister with me, when he didn't win the Leger last September."

"There was a deuce of a row," said Maule. Then Mr. Spooner, who read his *Bell's Life* and *Field* very religiously, and who never missed an article in *Baily's*, proceeded to give them an account of everything that had taken place in the Runnymede hunt. It mattered but little that he was wrong in all his details. Narrations always are. The result to which he came was nearly right when he declared that the major had been turned off, that a committee had been appointed, and that Messrs. Topps and Jawstock had been threatened with a lawsuit.

"That comes of employing men like Major Tifto," said Lord Chiltern solemnly, "in places for which they are radically unfit. I daresay Major Tifto knew how to handle a pack of hounds, perhaps almost as well as my huntsman, Fowler. But I don't think a county would get on very well which appointed Fowler Master of Hounds. He is an honest man, and therefore would be better than Tifto. But it would not

do. It is a position in which a man should at any rate be a gentleman. If he be not, all those who should be concerned in maintaining the hunt will turn their backs upon him. When I take my hounds over this man's ground, and that man's ground, certainly without doing him any good, I have to think of a great many things. I have to understand that those whom I cannot compensate by money, I have to compensate by courtesy. When I shake hands with a farmer and express my obligation to him because he does not lock his gates, he is gratified. I don't think any decent farmer would care much for shaking hands with Major Tifto. If we fall into that kind of thing there must soon be an end of hunting. Major Tifto's are cheap, no doubt; but in hunting, as in most other things, cheap and nasty go together. If men don't choose to put their hands in their pockets they had better say so, and give the thing up altogether. If you won't take any more wine, we'll go to the ladies. Silverbridge, the trap will start from the door to-morrow morning precisely at 9.30 A.M. Grantingham Cross is fourteen miles." Then they all left their chairs; but as they did so Mr. Spooner finished the bottle of port-wine.

"I never heard Chiltern speak so much like a book before," said Spooner to his wife, as she drove him home that night.

The next morning everybody was ready for a start at half-past nine, except Mr. Maule—as to whom his wife declared that she had left him in bed when she came down to breakfast. "He can never get there if we don't take him," said Lord Chiltern, who was in truth the most good-natured man in the world. Five minutes were allowed him, and then he came down with a large sandwich in one hand and a button-hook in the other, with which he was prepared to complete his toilet. "What the deuce makes you always in such a hurry?" was the first word he spoke as Lord Chiltern got on to the box. The master knew him too well to argue the point. "Well; he always is in a hurry," said the sinner, when his wife accused him of ingratitude.

"Where's Spooner?" asked the master when he saw Mrs. Spooner without her husband at the meet.

"I knew how it would be when I saw the port-wine," she said in a whisper that could be heard all round. "He has got it this time sharp—in his great toe. We shan't find at Grantingham. They were

cutting wood there last week. If I were you, my lord, I'd go away to the Spinnies at once."

"I must draw the country regularly," muttered the master.

The country was drawn regularly, but in vain till about two o'clock. Not only was there no fox at Grantingham Wood, but none even at the Spinnies. And at two Fowler, with an anxious face, held a consultation with his more anxious master. Trumpington Wood lay on their right, and that no doubt would have been the proper draw. "I suppose we must try it," said Lord Chiltern.

Old Fowler looked very sour. "You might as well look for a fox under my wife's bed, my lord."

"I daresay we should find one there," said one of the wags of the hunt. Fowler shook his head, feeling that this was no time for joking.

"It ought to be drawn," said Chiltern.

"Of course you know best, my lord. I wouldn't touch it—never no more. Let 'em all know what the Duke's Wood is."

"This is Lord Silverbridge, the duke's son," said Chiltern, laughing.

"I beg your lordship's pardon," said Fowler, taking off his cap. "We shall have a good time coming some day. Let me trot 'em off to Michaelmas Daisies, my lord. I'll be there in thirty minutes." In the neighbouring parish of St. Michael de Dezier there was a favourite little gorse which among hunting-men had acquired this unreasonable name. After a little consideration the master yielded, and away they trotted.

"You'll cross the ford, Fowler?" asked Mrs. Spooner.

"Oh, yes, ma'am; we couldn't draw the Daisies this afternoon if we didn't."

"It'll be up to the horses' bellies."

"Those who don't like it can go round."

"They'd never be there in time, Fowler."

"There's a many, ma'am, as don't mind that. You won't be one to stay behind."

The water was up to the horses' bellies, but, nevertheless, Mrs. Spooner was at the gorse side when the Daisies were drawn.

They found and were away in a minute. It was all done so quickly that Fowler, who had alone gone into the gorse, had hardly time to get out with his hounds. The fox ran right back, as though he were making for the duke's pernicious wood. In the first field or two there was a succession of gates, and there was not much to do in the way of jumping. Then the fox, keeping

straight ahead, deviated from the line by which they had come, making for the brook by a more direct course. The ruck of the horsemen, understanding the matter very well, left the hounds and went to the right, riding for the ford. The ford was of such a nature that but one horse could pass it at a time, and that one had to scramble through deep mud. "There'll be the devil to pay there," said Lord Chiltern, going straight with his hounds. Phineas Finn and Dick Rabbit were close after him. Old Fowler had craftily gone to the ford; but Mrs. Spooner, who did not intend to be shaken off, followed the master, and close with her was Lord Silverbridge. "Lord Chiltern hasn't got it right," she said. "He can't do it among these bushes." As she spoke the master put his horse to the bushes and then—disappeared. The lady had been right. There was no ground at that point to take off from, and the bushes had impeded him. Lord Chiltern got over, but his horse was in the water. Dick Rabbit and poor Phineas Finn were stopped in their course by the necessity of helping the master in his trouble.

But Mrs. Spooner, the judicious Mrs. Spooner, rode at the stream where it was, indeed, a little wider, but at a place in which the horse could see what he was about, and where he could jump from and to firm ground. Lord Silverbridge followed her gallantly. They both jumped the brook well, and then were together. "You'll beat me in pace," said the lady, as he rode up alongside of her. "Take the fence ahead straight, and then turn sharp to your right." With all her faults Mrs. Spooner was a thorough sportsman.

He did take the fence ahead, or rather tried to do so. It was a bank and a double ditch, not very great in itself, but requiring a horse to land on the top and go off with a second spring. Our young friend's nag, not quite understanding the nature of the impediment, endeavoured to "swallow it whole," as hard-riding men say, and came down in the further ditch. Silverbridge came down on his head, but the horse pursued his course—across a heavily-ploughed field.

This was very disagreeable. He was not in the least hurt, but it became his duty to run after his horse. A very few furrows of that work suffice to make a man think that hunting altogether is a "beastly sort of thing." Mrs. Spooner's horse, who had shown himself to be a little less quick of foot than his own, had known all about

the bank and the double ditch, and had, apparently of his own accord, turned down to the right, either seeing or hearing the hounds, and knowing that the ploughed ground was to be avoided. But his rider soon changed his course. She went straight after the riderless horse, and when Silverbridge had reduced himself to utter speechlessness by his exertions, brought him back his steed.

"I am—I am—I am—so sorry," he struggled to say; and then as she held his horse for him he struggled up into the saddle.

"Keep down this furrow," said Mrs. Spooner, "and we shall be with them in the second field. There's nobody near them yet."

CHAPTER LXIII. "I'VE SEEN 'EM LIKE THAT BEFORE."

ON this occasion Silverbridge stayed only a few days at Harrington, having promised Tregear to entertain him at the Bald-faced Stag. It was here that his horses were standing, and he now intended, by limiting himself to one horse a day, to mount his friend for a couple of weeks. It was settled at last that Tregear should ride his friend's horse one day, hire the next, and so on. "I wonder what you'll think of Mrs. Spooner," he said.

"Why should I think anything of her?"

"Because I doubt whether you ever saw such a woman before. She does nothing but hunt."

"Then I certainly shan't want to see her again."

"And she talks as I never heard a lady talk before."

"Then I don't care if I never see her at all."

"But she is the most plucky and most good-natured human being I ever saw in my life. After all, hunting is very good fun."

"Very; if you don't do it so often as to be sick of it."

"Long as I have known you I don't think I ever saw you ride yet."

"We used to have hunting down in Cornwall, and thought we did it pretty well. And I have ridden in South Wales, which I can assure you isn't an easy thing to do. But you mustn't expect much from me."

They were both out the Monday and Tuesday in that week, and then again on the Thursday without anything special in

the way of sport. Lord Chiltern, who had found Silverbridge to be a young man after his own heart, was anxious that he should come back to Harrington and bring Tregear with him. But to this Tregear would not assent, alleging that he should feel himself to be a burden both to Lord and Lady Chiltern. On the Friday Tregear did not go out, saying that he would avoid the expense, and on that day there was a good run. "It is always the way," said Silverbridge. "If you miss a day it is sure to be the best thing of the season. An hour and a quarter with hardly anything you could call a check! It is the only very good thing I have seen since I have been here. Mrs. Spooner was with them all through."

"And I suppose you were with Mrs. Spooner."

"I wasn't far off. I wish you had been there."

On the next day the meet was at the kennels, close to Harrington, and Silverbridge drove his friend over in a gig. The Master and Lady Chiltern, Spooner and Mrs. Spooner, Maule and Mrs. Maule, Phineas Finn, and a host of others consoled with the unfortunate young man because he had not seen the good thing yesterday. "We've had it a little faster once or twice," said Mrs. Spooner with deliberation, "but never for so long. Then it was straight as a line, and a real open kill. No changing, you know. We did go through the Daisies, but I'll swear to its being the same fox." All of which set Tregear wondering. How could she swear to her fox? And if they had changed, what did it matter? And if it had been a little crooked, why would it have been less enjoyable? And was she really so exact a judge of pace as she pretended to be? "I'm afraid we shan't have anything like that to-day," she continued. "The wind's in the west, and I never do like a westerly wind."

"A little to the north," said her husband, looking round the compass.

"My dear," said the lady, "you never know where the wind comes from. Now don't you think of taking off your comforter. I won't have it."

Tregear was riding his friend's favourite hunter, a thoroughbred bay horse, very much more than up to his rider's weight, and supposed to be peculiarly good at timber, water, or any well-defined kind of fence, however high or however broad. They found at a covert near the kennels,

and killed their fox after a burst of a few minutes. They found again, and having lost their fox, all declared that there was not a yard of scent.

"I always know what a west wind means," said Mrs. Spooner.

Then they lunched, and smoked, and trotted about, with an apparent acknowledgment that there wasn't much to be done. It was not right that they should expect much after so good a thing as they had had yesterday. At half-past two Mr. Spooner had been sent home by his Providence, and Mrs. Spooner was calculating that she would be able to ride her horse again on the Tuesday, when on a sudden the hounds were on a fox. It turned out afterwards that Dick Rabbit had absolutely ridden him up among the stubble, and that the hounds had nearly killed him before he had gone a yard. But the astute animal making the best use of his legs till he could get the advantage of the first ditch, ran, and crept, and jumped absolutely through the pack. Then there was shouting, and yelling, and riding. The men who were idly smoking threw away their cigars. Those who were loitering at a distance lost their chance. But the real sportsmen, always on the alert, always thinking of the business in hand, always mindful that there may be at any moment a fox just before the hounds, had a glorious opportunity of getting "well away." Among these no one was more intent, or, when the moment came, "better away," than Mrs. Spooner.

Silverbridge had been talking to her and had the full advantage of her care. Tregear was riding behind with Lord Chiltern, who had been pressing him to come with his friend to Harrington. As soon as the shouting was heard Chiltern was off like a rocket. It was not only that he was anxious to "get well away," but that a sense of duty compelled him to see how the thing was being done. Old Fowler certainly was a little slow, and Dick Rabbit, with the true bloody-minded instinct of a whip, was a little apt to bustle a fox back into covert. And then, when a run commences with a fast rush, riders are apt to over-ride the hounds, and then the hounds will over-run the fox. All of which has to be seen to by a master who knows his business.

Tregear followed, and being mounted on a fast horse was soon as forward as a judicious rider would desire.

"Now, Runks, don't you press on and

spoil it all," said Mrs. Spooner to the hard-riding objectionable son of old Runks the vet from Rufford. But young Runks did press on till the master spoke a word. The word shall not be repeated, but it was efficacious.

At that moment there had been a check—as there is generally after a short spurt, when fox, hounds, and horsemen get off together, and not always in the order in which they have been placed here. There is too much bustle, and the pack becomes disconcerted. But it enabled Fowler to get up, and by dint of growling at the men and conciliating his hounds, he soon picked up the scent. "If they'd all stand still for two minutes and be—to them," he muttered aloud to himself, "they'd 'ave some'at to ride arter. They might go then, and there's some of 'em 'd soon be nowhere."

But in spite of Fowler's denunciations there was, of course, another rush. Runks had slunk away, but by making a little detour was now again ahead of the hounds. And unfortunately there were half-a-dozen with him. Lord Chiltern was very wrath. "When he's like that," said Mrs. Spooner to Tregear, "it's always well to give him a wide berth." But as the hounds were now running fast it was necessary that even in taking this precaution due regard should be had to the fox's line. "He's back for Harrington Bushes," said Mrs. Spooner. And as she said so she rode at a bank, with a rail at the top of it perhaps a foot and a half high, with a deep drop into the field beyond. It was not a very nice place, but it was apparently the only available spot in the fence. She seemed to know it well, for as she got close to it she brought her horse almost to a stand, and so took it. The horse cleared the rail, seemed just to touch the bank on the other side, while she threw herself back almost on to his crupper, and so came down with perfect ease. But she, knowing that it would not be easy to all horses, paused a moment to see what would happen.

Tregear was next to her, and was intending to "fly" the fence. But when he saw Mrs. Spooner pull her horse and pause, he also had to pull his horse. This he did so as to enable her to take her leap without danger or encumbrance from him, but hardly so as to bring his horse to the bank in the same way. It may be doubted whether the animal he was riding would have known enough, and been quiet enough, to have per-

formed the acrobatic manœuvre which had carried Mrs. Spooner so pleasantly over the peril. He had some idea of this, for the thought occurred to him that he would turn and ride fast at the jump. But before he could turn he saw that Silverbridge was pressing on him. It was thus his only resource to do as Mrs. Spooner had done. He was too close to the rail, but still he tried it. The horse attempted to jump, caught his foot against the bar, and, of course, went over head foremost. This probably would have been nothing, had not Silverbridge with his rushing beast been immediately after them. When the young lord saw that his friend was down it was too late for him to stop his course. His horse was determined to have the fence, and did have it. He touched nothing, and would have skimmed in glory over the next field had he not come right down on Tregear and Tregear's steed. There they were, four of them, two men and two horses, in one confused heap.

The first person with them was Mrs. Spooner, who was off her horse in a minute. And Silverbridge too was very soon on his legs. He at any rate was unhurt, and the two horses were up before Mrs. Spooner was out of her saddle. But Tregear did not move. "What are we to do?" said Lord Silverbridge, kneeling down over his friend. "Oh, Mrs. Spooner, what are we to do?"

The hunt had passed on, and no one else was immediately with them. But at this moment Dick Rabbit, who had been left behind to bring up his hounds, appeared above the bank. "Leave your horse and come down," said Mrs. Spooner. "Here is a gentleman who has hurt himself." Dick wouldn't leave his horse, but was soon on the scene, having found his way through another part of the fence.

"No; he ain't dead," said Dick; "I've seen 'em like that before, and they wur'n't dead. But he's had a hawful squeeze." Then he passed his hand over the man's neck and chest. "There's a lot of 'em is broke," said he. "We must get him into Farmer Tooby's."

After awhile he was got into Farmer Tooby's, when that surgeon came who is always in attendance on a hunting-field. The surgeon declared that he had broken his collar-bone, two of his ribs, and his left arm. And then one of the animals had struck him on the chest as he raised himself. A little brandy was poured down his throat, but even under that operation

he gave no sign of life. "No, missis; he aren't dead," said Dick to Mrs. Tooby; "no more he won't die this bout; but he's got it very nasty."

That night Silverbridge was sitting by his friend's bedside at ten o'clock in Lord Chiltern's house. Tregear had spoken a few words, and the bones had been set. But the doctor had not felt himself justified in speaking with that assurance which Dick had expressed. The man's whole body had been bruised by the horse which had fallen on him. The agony of Silverbridge was extreme, for he knew that it had been his doing. "You were a little too close," Mrs. Spooner had said to him, "but nobody saw it, and we'll hold our tongues." Silverbridge, however, would not hold his tongue. He told everybody how it had happened, how he had been unable to stop his horse, how he had jumped upon his friend, and perhaps killed him. "I don't know what I am to do. I am so miserable," he said to Lady Chiltern with the tears running down his face.

The two remained at Harrington and their luggage was brought over from the Bald-faced Stag. The accident had happened on a Saturday. On the Sunday there was no comfort. On the Monday the patient's recollection and mind were re-established, and the doctor thought that perhaps, with great care, his constitution would pull him through. On that day the consternation at Harrington was so great that Mrs. Spooner would not go to the meet. She came over from Spoon Hall, and spent a considerable part of the day in the sick man's room. "It's sure to come right if it's above the vitals," she said, expressing an opinion which had come from much experience. "That is," she added, "unless the neck's broke. When poor old Jack Stubbs drove his head into his cap and dislocated his vertebury, of course it was all up with him." The patient heard this and was seen to smile.

On the Tuesday there arose the question of family communication. As the accident would make its way into the papers a message had been sent to Polwenning to say that various bones had been broken, but that the patient was upon the whole doing well. Then there had been different messages backwards and forwards, in all of which there had been an attempt to comfort old Mrs. Tregear. But on the Tuesday letters were written. Silverbridge, sitting in his friend's room, sent a long account of the

accident to Mrs. Tregear, giving a list of the injuries done.

"Your sister," whispered the poor fellow from his pillow.

"Yes—yes; yes, I will."

"And Mabel Grex." Silverbridge nodded assent, and again went to the writing-table. He did write to his sister, and in plain words told her everything. "The doctor says he is not now in danger." Then he added a postscript. "As long as I am here I will let you know how he is."

RENT-DAY IN PARIS.

IN the provinces of France you hire a set of rooms or a house by the year. The Parisians, less constant, hire by the quarter. The reader will remember that detached houses, and houses entirely occupied by one tenant or by one family, are the exception in Paris. The houses are almost invariably strongly-built compact stone blocks, five, six, or seven storeys high; and each floor will generally contain two, three, four, or more separate dwellings or apartments, each with its miniature *salle-à-manger*, *salon*, *bedroom*, *kitchen*, and *offices*, varying of course according to the rent paid and the quarter of the town in which it is situated. Some of the apartments give on the court-yard, and are not so gay and not so expensive as those which give on the street; some of which, and almost certainly the one on the fifth floor, will have a fine balcony. The fact of an apartment being tolerably high up is not considered a drawback in Paris. Jules Simon still lives on the fifth floor on the *Place de la Madeleine*, and Louis Blanc long lived *au cinquième* in the *Rue Royale*, before he migrated to the same elevation in the *Rue de Rivoli*. You get more air high up, and you have the advantage of a fine terrace-balcony, large enough in many cases to hold the dinner-table. In a district of Paris like the *Quartier Saint-Georges*, which is situated on the slopes leading up to *Montmartre*, anywhere between the *Rue Notre Dame de Lorette* and the *Rue de Moscou*, you will get an apartment on the fifth floor with a balcony for an annual rent of from seven hundred to one thousand francs, say thirty or forty pounds. It will consist of a tiny kitchen, a *salon*, a dining-room with a stove in it, one or two bedrooms, a closet or two, and offices. The rooms will be small and the ceilings rather low. In fact, in England

or America we should not think much of it. The first floor of such a house, containing, say, dining and drawing rooms, antechambers, and four or five sleeping rooms, with two or three servants' rooms up in the attics, would fetch as much as two, three and even four thousand francs a year. The fittings of the rooms will not be handsome. In France the dining-rooms of the grand hotels have a specialty of profuse ornamentation, and the foreigner thinks that the French are equally luxurious in their houses. This is not so. The ordinary apartment is fitted in a comparatively mean way. The paltriness of the door-handles and latches, to say nothing of their inconvenience, will strike the English or American visitor. The French locksmiths are more than half a century behind the times. The fire-places are constructed with a view to allowing the heat to escape up the chimney as much as possible. The folding doors, the casement windows, and the polished parquet floorings would give a handsome appearance to the rooms if they were only more lofty; but then again the proprietor, if it be he who does the repairs, will spoil the whole effect by a cheap and paltry wall-paper.

The size of apartments in Paris houses varies. According to the cadastral revision made last year, there were seventy-five thousand two hundred and seventy-four blocks of building in Paris, containing one million twenty-two thousand five hundred and thirty-nine distinct tenements, out of which about six hundred and eighty-five thousand are devoted to dwelling purposes and the rest to commerce and industry. The dwellings let at an annual rental of three hundred francs or under number four hundred and twelve thousand—that is to say, three-fifths of the whole. There are seventy-four thousand five hundred and sixty-nine dwellings let at from three hundred to five hundred francs; eighty-one thousand two hundred and fifty at a rental of from five hundred to one thousand francs; twenty-three thousand three hundred and ninety-five from one thousand to one thousand five hundred; twenty-one thousand four hundred and fifty-three from one thousand five hundred to three thousand; ten thousand from three thousand to six thousand; three thousand at from six thousand to ten thousand; and one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four dwellings at a higher rental than ten thousand francs.

During the present year building operations have been very actively carried on, and the increased accommodation thus provided will doubtless tend to make the above rentals stationary for some time to come; otherwise during the last fifteen years rents in Paris have nearly doubled.

The above figures will enable the reader to imagine the amount of money that changes hands on rent-day, and to conceive the unpopularity, as a class, of landlords and concierges who are connected with the collection of those sums. The way you take an apartment or dwelling in Paris is this: You choose the quarter of the town that you would wish to inhabit and you begin to hunt. Most people hunt for themselves, though there exist agencies for that purpose. As you pass along the street you will see little placards sticking out at right angles to the wall, by the side of the porte-cochère or entrance of the houses where there is anything to let. The placard, or écriteau, will say: "Petit" or "grand appartement à louer présentement, s'adresser." I do not ever remember to have seen a placard which told you where you were required to address yourself. As a matter of fact, you address yourself to the porter or concierge, or the porter's wife. Very often the placard will add that the apartment is orné de glaces, but as a rule that is a matter of course, it being the rule for the looking-glasses in the various rooms to be fixtures belonging to the proprietor. A bachelor's apartment, which may mean anything from a couple of rooms to a large suite, is advertised as an appartement de garçon; the meaning of such a placard is that ladies need not apply. Small apartments are often described as logements, particularly in the populous quarters.

The tenants of any single house in Paris will comprise a most varied assortment of types and characters. The first persons whose acquaintance you make are the concierge and his wife. The concierge is a despot who has all the tenants under his thumb. He is the guardian of the house, the Cerberus whose good graces have to be bought by bribes and tips. He dwells in a den called a loge, just inside the entry. His duties are to pull the cordon, or to touch the pneumatic button, by which the street-door is opened; for, let it be added for the benefit of those who do not know, each tenant, though he has a key to his own dwelling, has no key to the common

entrance of the house. The large street-doors are closed about nine or ten o'clock. After that time you have to ring the bell, and the concierge, without disturbing himself, pulls a cord or touches a pneumatic-spring by which the door is opened. In most houses the gas on the staircase and in the entrance-way is put out at eleven o'clock, and tenants who enter after that hour are required to call out their names as they pass the concierge's loge, and they have to find their way upstairs in the dark as best they can. In point of fact, you get used to it, and you put your hand upon the door-latch and your key in the key-hole with mathematical precision. Of course Cerberus knows and sees everything that you do. Besides opening the street-door and watching the house, it is the duty of the concierge to keep the stairway clean, to receive letters and messages, and to deliver the letters in the various apartments at least once a day. The concierge and his wife generally expect to do the apartments of the bachelors who live in the house, for which they receive fifteen or twenty francs a month. The other tenants, of course, have their own servants. On taking an apartment it is the custom to give the concierge ten, fifteen, twenty or more francs, according to the rent, as a pledge of the arrangement. This money is called a *denier à Dieu*. On New Year's Day the concierge expects twenty or more francs. The sum given to him depends on the number of letters or callers you receive and on your habits generally. If you are in the habit of coming home very early in the morning, you must make up for it by paying the concierge more. If you give a ball or a dinner-party you have to tip the concierge. In short, the reader will understand that the concierge is a nuisance which can be modified and appeased but not abolished. As for the locataires, or tenants, you may have the proprietor himself on the first floor; a countess and a cocotte on the second; a dressmaker and a financier on the third; a bourgeois family or two on the fourth; a literary man on the fifth; and an artist or a photographer on the sixth floor. You may, however, live for twenty years in a house and never see your opposite neighbour, or know who he or she is, and what he or she does.

The law of the land entitles the landlord to exact his rent on the eighth or fifteenth days of January, April, July, and October. Nominally the rent is due on the last days of December, March,

June, and September; and those are the days when notice to quit must be given before noon. The landlord, however, is not allowed to exact the payment of the rent before the eighth of the following month in the case of apartments the rent of which is four hundred francs or under, and before the fifteenth in the case of apartments let for more than that sum. As nobody cares about paying until he is obliged to do so, it has become the custom to allow the days of grace to elapse before the rent is collected. The same privilege of days of grace is accorded by invariable usages to tenants leaving an apartment; thus, although you take an apartment nominally from March 31, you cannot enter into possession until April 8 or 15, according to the rent. In the same way you do not quit until the 8th or 15th July. When you secure an apartment the concierge always goes to get information about you at your former dwelling, to see whether you have sufficient furniture to guarantee the rent, and to find out whether your habits are such as he approves. If he is not satisfied with the enquiry he may return you the *denier à Dieu*, and you must go and seek elsewhere. Some proprietors make it a rule to have the rent paid in advance, and refuse to pay interest on the money. The French submit to this abuse, as they do to many others, without protesting. They are indeed, the most long-suffering and patient people in Europe, although many people give them quite a different character. The unqualified despotism of concierges and landlords is a sufficient proof of their extreme patience.

Exactitude in the payment of the rent is a very serious matter in Paris. In the transactions of life it is equivalent to having your moral bills endorsed by your landlord. I remember on one occasion I went to interview a landlord relative to a dwelling that I had hired in one of his houses. He was a very suspicious and inquisitive old gentleman, who took snuff, and had made his fortune in the candle trade. "What do you sell?" he asked. I explained that I lived by what our American cousins call "slinging ink." He gravely shrugged his shoulders, and remarked in a half-compassionate way that he was sure that I should not be exact on the fifteenth of the fatal month. My landlord had the old-fashioned notions on literature and art and on those who follow those vocations. So, in order to prove to him my punctuality,

I went to call upon him in person on the fourteenth with my rent in my hand.

"I told you so!" exclaimed the precise old bourgeois. "I knew that you would not be exact at the day and the hour fixed. You have brought us your rent twenty-four hours too soon."

In Parisian society, more perhaps than anywhere else, is the landlord a king. He is above the concierge, who in many cases is merely his delegate. His quality alone commands respect. He is, indeed, the most august representative of the social organism. The typical proprietor is the Parisian. He is the highest development of his species. The proprietors of mines, of vineyards, or of farming land and forests have some relations with the commercial and the industrial worlds. The Parisian proprietor, on the contrary, is essentially nonproductive and passive. He seems to have come into the world merely in order to receive rents. His god, his faith, his law is rent-day; the tenant who pays is, in his eyes, an honest man; the tenant who does not pay is a rascal and a dangerous member of the community. With him there is no middle term. The model propriétaire should be portly, important, badly educated, but anxious to improve his mental condition. In his younger days, for he is now past fifty, he should have been engaged in commerce; his fortune should have been amassed with toil and difficulty, and by dint of endless pinching and cheeseparing. The frugal habits of the past cling to him in riper years. He is parsimonious, and his household is still managed on the principles of the strictest economy. His clothes are made of the stoutest and best materials, but entirely lack style. He passes the greater part of his time, when at home, in his study, the furniture of which should be old-fashioned and of mahogany-wood—the ne plus ultra of splendour for the bourgeois. His favourite house costume is a flowered dressing-gown. He rarely keeps a horse and carriage. Like Victor Hugo, his favourite means of locomotion are omnibuses and tram-cars. Except in the poorer quarters of the town, where the proprietors communicate directly with their tenants, the concierge forms the connecting-link between those two poles of the population—the landlord and the tenant. Some proprietors allow themselves the luxury of a steward, actuated by politico-economical motives. However highly the bump of

acquisitiveness may be developed, the proprietor remains a man, and his heart contains chords which will sometimes vibrate; and vibrations of these chords end in concessions. Now, there is nothing dearer to the heart of the proprietor than unchangeable revenues. On the steward, whose authority is merely delegated, and therefore inflexible, the tears of the widow and the orphan have no effect. Thus the proprietor avoids having his feelings tried, and succeeds in maintaining his budget unimpaired.

Proprietors have their eccentricities. As a general rule they will not allow their tenants to keep dogs in their rooms, nor will they allow the dogs of visitors to cross the door-sill. Certain proprietors, to the great disgust of old maids, forbid the presence of cats in a house. But this is not the end of the chapter. Some barbarous proprietors go so far as to exclude children under seven. There are, too, proprietors of delicate and sickly houses who proscribe dancing. Tea-parties and quiet music are tolerated, but grand-pianos and chamber-organs are looked at askance. There is one thing the very name of which awakens terror in the heart of all proprietors; happy would they be if they could erase the word from the dictionaries, and banish it from the world. That word is "repairs." It is the proprietor's nightmare. He would, it is to be believed, admit dogs, cats, and children, provided that he could get rid of repairs.

In short the proprietor is more than a man; he is almost a demi-god. In his hand he holds the sleep of the nation; all the laws are in his favour; and by a single word, he could, if he liked, send all Paris to sleep à la belle étoile, under the canopy of the heavens. When a man thinks of this eventuality he feels his soul filled with awe; and at the sight of this great being, armed with the insignia of his empire in the shape of a receipt, he would willingly repeat with M. de Voltaire:

Qui que tu sois, voici ton maître,
Il l'est, le fut, ou le doit être.

The concierge is more practically disagreeable than the propriétaire, because one's dealings with him are constant and daily. Except in some modern houses, where light and air have been more freely admitted, the loge in which the concierge lives and sleeps is a mere black-hole. The loge itself contains necessarily a bell and a cordon, or its equivalent, to attend to which is the nightly duty of Cerberus.

During the day the concierge very often works at a trade, tailoring and shoemaking being the favourite occupations of the class. They are paid by the landlord a fixed sum varying from four hundred to one thousand francs a year, and they, of course, have their lodgings free. As New Year's Day approaches the concierge bows, scrapes, and cringes; during the rest of the year he looks surly, smells of garlic, and is ever casting a restless and inquisitive eye on the outgoings and incomings of the locataires, whose every movement he commands from his loge. Personally, the concierge is a pale-faced, unhealthy looking man, shod with embroidered slippers, and affecting as a head-covering a fez or a fancy cap on which the partner of his slumbers has exercised her inventive sempstress's skill: a man whose face is oftener dirty than clean; whose beard, if he wears one, does not rival a new silk hat in glossiness; whose neck is grimy, whose mouth is puckered, and the habitual expression of whose countenance is one of dissatisfaction and gloomy melancholy, such as we should expect to find on the countenance of a man whose sleep is being constantly disturbed by the tinkling of the door-bell, and who, as a rule, is deprived of his fair share of light and air. His wife is a gossip, loud voiced, often a scold, stout, and in her old age shapeless. In other respects she is the feminine equivalent of her husband, over whom she has the upper hand. The child of this happy pair, if child there be, is generally a daughter, who grows up very pretty, and almost invariably studies under Talbot or at the Conservatoire, and makes her debut on the stage; where she succeeds either in captivating the public by her talent, or some particular member or members of the public by her person.

Concierges have been calumniated, I have no doubt; epigram and caricature have treated them perhaps too hardly; and it is in order to celebrate their morality and supreme prudence that I relate the following circumstance.

When I moved into the apartment which I now occupy, I observed on the window of the concierge's loge the inscription: "Le concierge fait aussi les commissions." A few days afterwards, having by this time observed that the concierge did next to nothing, and remembering that, according to the inscription, he ran errands also, I took down a letter which I wished to be carried to its destination at once. The concierge had just sat down to table

with his wife; he hastened to wipe his mouth, and rose to receive the letter, which was accompanied by a piece of two francs. The superscription bore these words: "A Madame Félicia Dubois, Rue de Lille 13.

"I will go at once," said the concierge.

"There is an answer," I added.

"Very good, sir."

As soon as I had gone upstairs, events must have passed somewhat as follows. The concierge's wife could not help remarking how inopportunistly this commission had arrived, and advised her husband at least to eat his soup and a bit of veal; for the weather was damp, the Rue de Lille was some distance away, and he had need of fortifying himself, as his companion judiciously remarked.

At last he was just taking his cap off the peg to start, when two persons entered the loge, his brother-in-law and his sister-in-law. The good folks had not seen each other for a long time, and so there was much effusion and embracing, and heaps of things to be said. The concierge sat down again, thinking that Madame Dubois could very well wait a few minutes. Nine o'clock, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock struck without the brother-in-law and sister-in-law making any signs of going. The concierge put off his errand till the following day, on the representations of his wife that they were not slaves after all, that they too belonged to society, and that they had family duties just as much as the tenants.

The next day, at dawn, the concierge, pricked on by the confused reproaches of his conscience, started hurriedly for the Rue de Lille. About eight o'clock I came down to ask for the answer. "I do not know," said the astute wife; "my husband has gone out." Twice during the day I presented myself at the loge with the same result. The concierge had not come home. His wife was visibly uneasy. What could have happened to him? And mentally she must have sent the Rue de Lille and Madame Dubois to the deuce, to say nothing of me, the new tenant and the innocent cause of all the evil.

At last, at a considerably advanced hour of the evening, the concierge appeared, with a song on his lips, his cap leaning coquettishly over one ear, and a benevolent expression on his countenance. He was, in short, as the French say, allumé or slightly intoxicated. His wife understood at a glance the position of affairs. She said

nothing. He spoke loud and abundantly ; he had confounded the Rue de Lille with another street and had to go back ; then just as he was crossing the Pont-Neuf he met some friends, some brothers-in-arms : in short, the old, old story of the litre à seize. And finally, when after a thousand adventures he had found himself before Madame Dubois's door, he had perceived with consternation that he had left the letter in the pocket of his old waistcoat. The good man then gained his bed by a series of cleverly executed flank movements.

His wife was afoot early the next day. She had passed an agitated night, and the result of her reflections was that she would take the letter herself ; or rather she would first make enquiries about this Madame Félicia Dubois ; and get to know who she was, whence she came, what profession she exercised, if she was really married, and if her husband's name was Félicia Dubois. "For after all," she said with much gesticulation to her husband, "Paris is the fatherland of adventuresses ! That is no reason why we should be abused. We are concierges, it is true ; you also run errands—it is written up—but for all that we have not renounced all sentiments of delicacy and honour. Wait till I come back !"

She went off in state with these words, and when I came down the third day to look after my reply, the concierge could only stammer out : "Oh ! yes—the letter—I do not know—my wife has gone out." When I came down once more two hours later, I found myself face to face with the wife of the concierge, who said to me with a freezing coldness and severity : "Here, sir ; take back your letter and your two francs ; we are not in the habit of undertaking errands of that kind !"

I never understood what she thought she had discovered concerning the moral character of Madame Dubois. On enquiring, however, at the Rue de Lille, I could find no evidence of her having been there ; and I concluded that the romantic name, Félicia, on which the worthy woman had been reflecting all night, had caused her imagination to get the better of her judgment.

WOOD ANEMONES.

A MIST of violets white and blue,
A fringe of fern-leaves, washed with dew,
And dried by April's breeze :
A belt of blue-bells all a-row,
And on the tender grass a snow
Of wood anemones.

The wind-swayed branches rise and fall,
The little wood is musical

With dulcet tones and clear,
The hum of bee, the song of bird,
And in the carol's pause is heard
The streamlet running near.

Beneath the spreading woodland trees,
Among the white anemones,

Two children are at play :
The blossoms opening one by one
Their star-like faces to the sun,
Are not more pure than they.

They laugh away the merry hours,
They crown themselves with woodland flowers,

They mimic bird and bee ;
Till one, the graver of the twain,
Holds up, to tell of coming rain,
A closed anemone.

Ah, sister mine ! through all the years,
Through mists of shed and unshed tears

Mine eyes can yet behold
A picture of that sunlit wood,
The snow-white carpet where we stood
And watched the flowers unfold.

Ah, sister dear ! 'tis meet for thee
To wear the wood anemone

Upon thy gentle breast :
Thou hast not left life's quiet ways
To follow after gain and praise
With spirit of unrest.

I had no mind for woodland bowers,
I scorned the simple woodland flowers

We pulled together then :
But waves of tender memory roll
Full often over my sick soul
In busy haunts of men.

And my true nature, finding voice,
Reminds me of thy better choice,

Thy calm, contented part :
My rose of life hath thorns—thy flower
Is fresh and pure as in the hour
It blossomed from thine heart.

Ah, my sweet sister, words are vain,
Yet could I stand with thee again

Beneath youth's budding trees,
I think my heart would freely choose
From out all blossoms of all hues
Life's wood anemones.

WELSH FOLK-LORE.

COLLECTING folk-lore is a delicate task. Most people are shy of talking about what they are a little ashamed of believing. Emile Souvestre in his delightful books about Brittany, and the Marquis of Villemarqué, indefatigable collector of Breton ballads, both testify to the difficulty of getting at the old tales. You are almost sure to freeze people into silence if they think you come as a collector and mean printing. To set their tongues going you must be really sympathetic, and they must feel that you are. This is needful even in Ireland, where a more mixed race, oftener brought in contact with strangers, is readier at talking. In Ireland it is about religious legends that people are most reticent, till they know you, and feel they can trust you. Go to Lough

Derg, the gloomy little lake in an unutterably dreary swamp in Donegal, where is St. Patrick's purgatory, so famous in the middle ages, and, unless you bring credentials of some kind, you will learn on the spot less than you can read in a guide-book. But the shyer Welshman will, ten to one, decline to talk about legends of any kind until you have found some way of opening his heart. This was also Mr. F. Campbell's experience in the West Highlands and islands, where he collected those tales that every folk-lore student ought to read. He found the language a wonderful help. The man who would be short and gruff with a Southron will change, as if by magic, his whole face and manner when his greeting, "It's a fine day," is met with, "Tha n' latha briagh" (the day is fine). "You have Gaelic?" he exclaims. "You will take my excuse by your leave, but what part of the Gaeldom are you from?" And then follows a pleasant talk, and any story that the man has is readily told. But sometimes Mr. Campbell found even his Gaelic insufficient. One old dame of over seventy, known to be sole possessor of several stories, when he used to try to bring the conversation round that way, would turn him aside with: "Hush, my dear, the ursgeal (tale) is all nonsense. God bless you! I knew your grandmother; and her cousin used to look just as you do now;" and so it took a week's coaxing to get all her ursgeal out of the old woman.

All honour, then, to Mr. Wirt Sikes, United States Consul for Wales, for having (matter-of-fact as we suppose the Americans to be) felt sympathy, and convinced others that he felt it. He had a grand field in Wales. Among such romantic scenery old-world beliefs are sure to linger longest, but, as he says, you might live for years in Wales, and yet never learn anything about the folk-lore unless you go amongst the people, as he took care to do, and show them that you really think and feel with them, instead of letting them fancy you come as a collector.

Mr. Sikes has thoroughly worked South Wales, and Monmouthshire which is more Welsh than Wales itself; and he has worked, so to speak, sympathetically, for in many of the Welsh beliefs he finds a curious parallel to the spiritualism which is so rampant in his American home. One is startled to find that among the matter-of-fact Yankees, "in Cambridge, under the classic shadow of Harvard College," is a

house so badly haunted that a tenant who ventured to take it in 1877 was actually worried out of it.

But of ghost stories there is less need to speak, as they are the common property of the human race. There is nothing distinctly Welsh in a grand lady in high-heeled shoes with a long train of the finest silk stalking through the house, and setting all the dogs barking, as Lady Stradling is said to do at St. Donat's Castle, by the Nash Point, whenever any mischief is about to befall the family. Nor is the following well-authenticated tale about a scion of a noble house peculiar to the principality: "Thomas Cadogan had large estates, but he was not satisfied, and was once tempted to shift his neighbour's landmark, the neighbour being a poor widow who owned a small freehold. So after his death Cadogan had to walk this earth, till at last he made bold to confront a woman, who happened, very late one evening, to be crossing a stile on a very lonely path. She, forgetting for the moment both her grammar and the fact that Cadogan was dead, cried: 'Mr. Cadogan, what does you here this time o' night?' 'I was obliged to come,' meekly replied the ghost; and he then instructed her to tell so-and-so to put back the stones in order that he might have rest."

There is an ethical and utilitarian tone about this which is sadly wanting in the following legend of the river Rheidol, near that well-known tourist's haunt, Machynlleth. Catrin and David Gwyn were just married (1705), and lived in a shepherd's hut, of which many can still point out the ruins. One day, coming back from market with a party of neighbours, she parted from them about two miles from home and was never seen again. A fearful storm came on, and a scrap of her red cloak being found on the edge of a quaking bog, it was believed she had tumbled in and been swallowed up. Her husband went mad, the cottage fell to ruin, and to this day "White Catti of the Grove Cwm" is dreaded as a malignant spirit who pushes people into the river or inveigles them into bottomless morasses. Here we have a survival of the feeling which makes the Santal, in India, offer a parting meal to the dead, accompanying it with the words: "Now go away; don't come near us any more. We've been very good to you; now stay away."

Neither are the stories about spectral animals distinctly Welsh, though they

are extremely numerous amongst our Cambrian fellow subjects. The dog, man's friend, so invaluable to the shepherd, is naturally credited with a life beyond the grave. "It is hard to look into that dog's eyes," said a Welshman to Mr. Sikes, "and believe that he has not a bit of a soul to be saved." The ghostly dog, however, is usually the reverse of beneficent. One of the most persistent of Welsh legends is that of "the Dog of Darkness," with his huge fiery eyes, which is told in the *Mabinegion* in almost the very words in which "Mr. David Brewster, of Pembroke-shire, a religious man, and free from fear and superstition," described what "befell him on Coet Moor as he was passing the huge upright stones called 'the Devil's Nags.' He was seized and thrown over a hedge. But being, as we said, 'far from superstition,' he went next day, taking with him a strong, fighting mastiff. When he came by 'the Devil's nags' he saw a dog more terrible than tongue can tell. In vain he set his dog at it; the huge beast crouched frightened at his master's feet. Even then brave David was not dismayed, but took up a stone to fling at the uncanny creature; but suddenly a circle of fire, lighting up the gloom, showed the white snip down the dog's nose, and his grinning teeth and white tail, all which signs marked him out as one of 'the dogs of hell' (*Cwn Annwn*)."

"The wild huntsman as a personage," Mr. Sikes tells us, "has quite dropped out of modern belief in Wales;" which is strange, because besides haunting Windsor Forest he is well known in Cornwall, sometimes (as near Bodmin) mixed up with the Arthur legends and the tales about the evil spirit Tregeagle, sometimes, as near the Lizard, identified with an oppressive steward of the Robarteses. Henderson, in his *Folklore of the Northern Border*, suggests that this myth of the 'grand veneur' may have come from the strange cries, not unlike the yelping of a pack of hounds, uttered by wildfowl on their passage northward. But though the demon-hunt is wanting, the headless horse as a death-omen (sometimes drawing a hearse or a coach) is found in Wales, as it is in Devonshire and in Hurst Wood, near Tunbridge Wells. Horses, moreover, are held to be specially gifted with the power of discerning spirits, a belief which you may think due to their habit of shying in the dark at anything white, or (if you are transcendently philosophical) to "the

horse's eye being able to receive an image which the human retina fails to accept."

In Wales phantom horsemen have better work to do than to hunt all night with a pack of demon hounds. Here is an instance recorded by the Rev. John Jones, of Holywell, in Flint, a preacher of extraordinary power, renowned and respected throughout Wales. We may mention that Welsh apparitions are usually vouched for by pious men. Thus the great authority for Monmouth is Edmund Jones, also a famous preacher, called the Prophet, who in 1813 published a book on the subject, denouncing all sceptics as Sadducees and infidels. In the West Highlands, on the contrary, the kirk, though powerless against whisky drinking, has, Mr. Campbell says, sadly destroyed people's interest in the old legends. Edmund Jones even found authority from the twelfth chapter of St. Matthew, forty-third verse, for fairies. "The fairy-rings are in dry places, and the Scripture saith that the walk of evil spirits is in dry places." But to return to John Jones, of Holywell. As this pious man, after preaching at Bala, was riding to Machynlleth, he was aware that he was being dogged by a murderous-looking man carrying a sickle. He remembered to have noticed this man at an inn where he had pulled out his watch and shown his purse. "The man means to rob, perhaps murder me," thought he, as he marked him skulking under the hedge. He could not take across country, for the road was sunk behind high banks. Should he turn back? "In despair, rather than in a spirit of humble trust and confidence," he says, "I bowed my head, and was silently praying, when my horse, growing impatient, started off. I clutched at the reins, but instantly let them fall upon his neck; for, lo! at my side I beheld a dark-clad horseman on a white steed. I at once spoke to him, but he made no answer, gazing intently at a gate some distance ahead. I looked, and saw the reaper dart out from his hiding-place, sheathe his sickle, and hurry away over a field. I again accosted my companion both in Welsh and English, but he was speechless, save that I thought he said 'Amen' to a pious remark. Suddenly he was gone, but whither? for he could not have leapt the banks, and I am sure he did not pass through the gate." Clearly the mysterious horseman was sent by Providence to save the preacher from danger.

As in Chinese Folk-lore,* a whole set of ghost stories turns on the restitution of ill-gotten goods. Buried hoards, too, hinder the peace of those who made them. The Ogmores, in Glamorgan, is a favourite river for hoarded money to be thrown into. The ghost haunts someone till he or she is persuaded to search for the hoard, and then fling it honestly into the stream. A miser's housekeeper in St. Donats-cwm was so worried by her master's ghost, that, to get rid of him, the Methodists resolved to hold a prayer-meeting in the house. While they were in the thick of it, she suddenly sprang up crying: "There he is, there he is!" After a dead silence some bold person ventured to say: "Ask it what it wants?" She did so; and, though no one heard the reply, the woman, instructed by the ghost, rushed to the chimney, thrust up her arm, and drew down a bag of money. "Let me go, let me go!" she screamed; and, starting out at the door, was seen to skip, without touching it, over a stile and away to the Ogmores. After an hour she came back, bedraggled with wet and bespattered with mud. "I've been down to the river," said she, "and have thrown the money in, and the ghost took his hat off, and made a low bow, and vanished."

Methodism, however, is not the most powerful exorciser. The church clergy, though their other ministrations may be little valued, are still held to be best at ridding a place of ghosts, and the exorcism is doubled in efficacy if it be pronounced in Latin. No Welsh ghost is recorded to have turned the tables on the exorciser, after the fashion of that Chinese ghost who drove out the Taomist priest, incense-pots, joss-sticks, and all; but sometimes a stubborn ghost will not obey the behest of a single clergyman. A triple-parson power, however, will master any spirit that ever walked.

As in West Connaught, the hare in several parts of Wales is either sacred or uncanny. When there is a witch in the neighbourhood she is sure to go about in the form of a hare. At Llangynog, in Montgomery, the superstition takes a singularly beautiful form. Here hares are called St. Melangell's lambs, the story being that Melangell (Monacella), daughter of an Irish king, took a vow of celibacy and fled from her father's court to the wilds of Montgomery to avoid marriage.

Here the Prince of Powys, hare-hunting one day, was astonished to see the game run under the robe of a beautiful virgin who was kneeling in prayer. The dogs stood howling at a distance, the huntsman's horn stuck to his lips. The prince gave her a parcel of land to be a sanctuary for all comers. There you can see her bed in the cleft of a rock, and in the church is a rude wooden carving representing many hares scuttling to her for protection. Till lately no one in that parish would kill a hare; and all believed that if, meeting a hare hunted by dogs, you cried, "God and St. Melangell be with you," it was sure to escape. It is interesting to remember that Cæsar says the old Britons thought it an unholy thing to eat the hare; but then they also abstained from the goose, about eating which none of their modern descendants have any scruples.

More distinctively Welsh are the stories about the Tylwyth Teg—i.e., "fair folk," as Irish fairies are always dubbed "good people," as the Greeks called the fairies "the gracious ones" (Eumenides), as Sir W. Scott tells us the Highlanders took off their hats to the gibbon, and called it "the kind gallows," and as Laplanders speak of the bear as "the old gentleman in the fur coat." Some, instead of seeing in "fair" a deprecatory or euphemistic epithet, take it literally, and connect the fairies with invaders from Ireland, "Picts and Scots," small parties of whom were left when the rest were driven out. These, living in fear of their lives, used to send out their children at night, fantastically dressed, for food and exercise. This theory is seriously put forth by Rev. Peter Roberts, author of *Collectanea Cambrica*; his alternative theory being that the fairies were those who still adhered to the Druidic faith, and therefore had to keep in hiding from their Christian persecutors. No doubt outlaws sometimes tried to invest themselves with supernatural attributes; thus the Pwca (Puck) at the farm of Trwyn in the strangely-named parish of Mynyddyslwyn was "yr Arglwydd Hywel"—i.e., Lord Howel, proscribed by the English, and concealed by his tenantry. He hid during the day in a room contrived between two floors, like those in which Roman priests were concealed in Elizabeth's time. Sometimes he used to join in the talk that went on in the living-room below. For instance, when the servants were comparing hands, as to whiteness and size, a gentle voice said: "the Pwca's hand is the

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 24, p. 204.

fairest and smallest." They bravely asked it to show its hand, and through a chink in the ceiling a hand was thrust down, small, fair, and delicately formed, with a large gold ring on the little finger. So, again, a set of marauders who, in the sixteenth century, were the terror of Merioneth, gave out that they were fairies. They lived in dens in the ground, had fiery red hair, and fed on stolen sheep. At last Lord Owen gathered a troop, and soon proved that the red fairies were flesh and blood by defeating them, and hanging a hundred of his prisoners. He spared the women, one of whom begged hard for her son's life. Owen spurned her away; whereupon she opened her breast and shrieked: "This breast has nursed other sons who will yet wash their hands in thy blood." Not long after, the fairy woman's remaining sons waylaid Lord Owen at a certain gate, called to this day *Lliadiart y Barwn* (Baron's gate), in *Cemmaes* parish, slew him, and washed their hands in his blood.

Prophet Jones's theory is this: "The fairies are the souls of heathens and others who lived without having heard the means of grace, and who, therefore, do not deserve so severe a punishment as bad Christians." "The reason why they are so numerous and active in Wales is, that in the eighth and ninth centuries the Welsh lost the light of true Christianity, and received Popery instead. This enabled the fairies to be bolder and more intrusive; and then, in Henry the Fourth's time, the hard laws which hindered the Welsh from educating their children, brought a total darkness on them, and so left them helpless against such beings. These laws were enacted after Owen Glendwr had failed, foolishly thinking his nation could shake off the Saxon yoke before it had repented of its sins."

The Vale of Neath, still fairy haunted, was a famous place for fairies in the twelfth century. Gerald du Barri (alias Giraldus Cambrensis) tells of the naughty *Elidurus*, who, having run away from school, was lured into fairyland. He often used to visit the upper world, and once his mother bade him bring her a present of gold. So, while at play with the king's son, he stole the golden ball and ran off. At his threshold, however, two elves tripped him up; the ball fell, and they seized it, "showing him every mark of contempt; for the fairies, though they have no form of public worship, are great lovers of truth and strictly honest." They are a pattern, too, to mortals

in their domestic life. Inconstancy and infidelity are unknown. Wife-beaters had better eschew fairy-wives. One New Year's Eve, a young farmer of *Myddfai* parish, *Caermarthen*, went to look for his lambs by the lake called *Llyn y Fan Fach*, in the Black Mountains. On the lake he saw three lovely girls rowing in a golden boat. They landed, and he tried to catch them, but they always escaped. A wizard told him to throw in seven loaves and a cheese on Midsummer Eve. He did so, though to part with a fine cheese grieved him sore. There was no result; but next New Year's Eve, in answer to the same offering, the golden boat appeared, the girls landed, and let him talk to them. In fact, he actually ventured to propose to one of them. "I'll marry you," said she, "if you can distinguish me to-morrow from my two sisters." Fortunately he had noticed a peculiarity in the strapping of her sandal; so next day she went with him to his farm, bringing out of the lake seven cows and a bull for dowry. "I shall leave you," she said, "the moment you have struck me thrice without cause." For years they lived happily, and her three sons became the celebrated *Meddygon Myddfai*, certain physicians renowned in the thirteenth century (so curiously does a bit of real history mingle with the old world myth). One day they were at a christening, when the *gwraig* (hag, fairy) burst into tears. "What are you making a fool of yourself for?" angrily asked her husband. "Why should I not weep? Misery lies before that poor babe in a world of sin and sorrow," she replied. He pushed her pettishly away. "I warn you, husband," said she, "you have struck me once." Not long after, at a child's funeral, she laughed, and sang, and even danced. Again her husband was angry, nor was he appeased by her explanation "that the dear child is gone to be good and happy for ever." He struck her once more. Again, at a wedding, the bride was young and fair, the bridegroom a decrepit old miser. Here she fell a weeping, "for," said she, "it is the diawl's compact. Youth weds age for greed, and not for love." He thrust her from him in a rage. She looked at him with tender love and reproach, saying: "The three blows are struck; husband, farewell." Her fairy kine all disappeared with her. Sometimes the compact takes a different form. A fairy-wife was given by her father (the only appearance of such a personage at these weddings) to a farmer's

son of Drws Coed (Oakwood), the condition being that she should never be touched with iron. They had several children, and lived most happily; but one day her horse sank in the deep mire, and as her husband was helping her to remount his stirrup struck her knee. At once sweet singing was heard on the hill-top, and she was parted from him; but, though no longer allowed to walk the earth with man, she used to haunt the turf-lake (Llyn y dwarchen). This lake has moving islands of tussock grass, like Derwentwater and the little lake of St. Quinlan, near Kenmare, "in which," an old man told me, "the islands move mostly about the time of the great Church festivals." So on one of these islands she used to stand for hours, and hold converse with her husband. A realistic account of the origin of the lake-maidens is current in the vale of Clwyd. The men of Ardudwy finding no suitable wives in their own class, perhaps being, by tribal usage, limited to what the ethnologists call exoteric marriages, carried off a number of girls. Their fathers and brothers pursued and slaughtered the robbers; whereupon the girls cast themselves into the so-called maidens' lake (Llyn y morwynion).

Far less pleasant than sportive elves (ellyllon) or lake-maidens are the gwyllion, old women of the mountain (gwyll, gloom). Prophet Jones minutely describes one who haunted Llanhyddel Mountain in Monmouth. She wore an oblong four-cornered hat and ash-coloured clothes, had her apron thrown over her shoulder, and a wooden milk-can in her hand. "Wow up!" was her cry, which is the English form of Ww-bwb, the Welsh cry of distress. Those who saw her were sure to lose their way, no matter how well they might know the road. John ap John of Cwm (Coombe) Celym, described by Prophet Jones as "no profane, immoral man, but honest, peaceable, knowing, and very comely moreover," was going to Carrleon fair. When at the pass in the Black Mountain (Bwlch y Llwyn) he heard shouting, first on one side of him then on the other. He was seized with a great fright, suspecting it was no human voice; and at last he detected the gwyll's cry "Wow up!" Running out of the road he threw himself on the ground and buried his face in the heather, till the thing should have gone by. When the sounds had died away he got up, and found the mists clearing and the birds

singing to welcome the dawn. Knives are very valuable in driving gwyllion and other spirits away—a survival, Mr. Sikes thinks, of the belief in Excalibur and other magic swords.

Stories about changelings are not distinctively Welsh. In Denmark and Sweden the mother heats the oven as if intending to put the suspected changeling in (no doubt in olden time she really used to do so); or else she throws it into the water, believing that if it be a fairy child it will swim like a duck. Among the Germans changelings used to have very hard times. Luther tells us of one whom he wanted much to have thrown into the Moldau, and to test which he seems to have recommended starvation, for his complaint of it was that "it would eat as much as two threshers, would laugh when any evil happened in the house, and cry when all went well." One Welsh test (known also in Ireland) was to sit the child on a hot shovel; another, tried with fatal result in Carnarvon as late as 1857, was to wash it in a decoction of fox-glove. Prophet Jones's description of a changeling, which he naively says "lived longer than such children usually do," proves that faith in changelings helped the survival of the fittest, or rather the removal of the unfit. "I saw him myself," he tells us of an idiot left instead of a child in Church Valley, Monmouth; "there was something diabolical in his aspect, and especially in his motions. He made very disagreeable screaming sounds frightening to strangers, but was otherwise harmless. He was of a dark, tawny complexion."

Far kindlier was the old test—to prepare a meal for several people in an egg-shell. The astonished changeling is sure to ask "What are you doing, mother dear?" and on being told he answers in verses which, with the change of only a few letters, are also extant in Brittany: "I've seen the acorn before I saw the oak; I've seen the egg before I saw the white hen; but the like of this I never saw before." Whereupon the mother replies: "You've seen too many things, my son; you shall have a beating," or "you shall be thrown into the pool!" In either case the changeling roars lustily, and the fairy mother rescues him, leaving the stolen child in the cradle asleep. Welsh fairies, when of riper years, are sometimes got rid of in a similar way. Dewi Dal's house was overrun with fairies; so one day when his big field was being reaped (it took fifteen men) he, by direction of a

wise man, told his wife to prepare a meal for the reapers, and to see that it was substantial and sufficient. "The fifteen shall have no reason to complain," said she, talking loudly so that the fairies might hear her. So she got a sparrow and trussed and roasted it, and then set it with a scrap of bread and a pinch of salt on the table. "Let us go quickly," said the fairies, "for our friends must be in poor case indeed; else they would not have set out such a provision as this for fifteen men."

Whether the Coblynau (goblins) or mine-fairies are originally Welsh, or are the German Kobolds, brought in by Continental miners, I cannot say. The Bwbach is the Scotch "brownie," helpful in household matters. It is chiefly mischievous to preachers: "Fairies hate methodys and total abstiners." One told Mr. Sikes that, as he was crossing a field reading his hymn-book, a sudden fear came over him, and his legs began to tremble. "A shadow crept upon me from behind, and when I turned it was myself, my features, dress, everything, even the hymn-book. I looked at it for a moment, and then fell down in a swoon." This was considered a warning (not as such wraiths usually are) of coming death, but that he ought to leave those parts. He accordingly rode off next day, and people averred that as he was starting the Bwbach jumped up behind him, and the horse went off like the wind, while fire flashed from his eyes.

The Welsh fairy king is Gwyn ap Nudd (brightness of Neath); he is also king of Annwn, which, usually rendered hell, is rather the shadowy land, the Greek Hades. Welsh lore does not provide him with a Titania; but Mab, Mr. Sikes claims as Welsh. The word simply means young; mab gath being a kitten, a young cat; mabinogi a tale for the young; and so in West Cornwall a young hen is always mabyer. Pwca spirit (phoooca, in Irish, as at the Wicklow lakelet called Pool a phoooca) is Shakespeare's Puck. Mr. Sikes thinks he has got the exact place, Cwm Pwca, a glen in the Brecon Clydach, described in *Midsummer Night's Dream*; and he fancies that to his friend Richard, son of Sir John Price, of the Priory, Brecon, Shakespeare was indebted for the character of the mischievous elf. Anyhow, Falstaff knew the weakness of the Cambrian fairy-wife when he said, "Heaven defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese."

Mr. Sikes also tells about holy wells;

stones with a legend ("There is always a story about every cromlech," says the well-known archaeologist Mr. Lukis); quaint old customs, such as giving a dole of meat and drink over a corpse; and superstitions which have a physical explanation. One of these is the "corpse candle," anent which Mr. Sikes tells how some London hospital nurses, never having heard of corpse candles, were horrified to see flames coming out of a dying patient's mouth. They thought the torments of hell had already begun. The cause, the doctors said, was incipient decomposition setting free phosphuretted hydrogen.

Mr. Sikes was sure to be a popular collector, for he had formed a good opinion of those amongst whom he went about. "The moral tone of Wales," he says, "is certainly on the whole better than that of Great Britain generally. There is a prevailing impression to the contrary; but that has grown out of English injustice to Wales, allied to English ignorance of the Welsh." Some Welsh customs, such as grave-dressing, might well be more widely imitated. Some Celtic superstitions, that about the banshee, for instance, reappear in America; while as for riding a broomstick, or being carried through the air by a goblin, have not Mr. Home and Mrs. Guppy done the same? A very practical superstition is that which teaches you that your warts may be "carried into the next county," and imagination is strangely efficacious in greater matters than the cure of warts. Cadwallader's goat I specially recommend to readers of Mr. Sikes; it is the analogue of a number of tales in widely sundered countries. Indeed, mountain, and quaking bog, and mist, and cwrw (beer) which makes all things indistinct, are answerable for the chief peculiarities of Welsh folk-lore as compared with that of more prosaic nations.

Though Mr. Sikes went about much and most successfully among the people, he has also consulted books, such as *Cambrian Superstitions*, a rare little collection published at Tipton, in 1831, the author being W. Howells, a lad of nineteen, who wrote to win a small prize offered by Archdeacon Brynon, in a Carmarthen newspaper. From a book he got the beautiful and very old tale of Einion and the Lady of the Wood, the oldest form of which is in the Iolo MSS.; and also that of Tudor of Llangollen, who was so delighted with the fairy music and dancing that, flinging his cap into the air, and shouting: "Play

away, old devil. Brimstone and water, if you like," he rushed to join in. But at his words the engaging mannikin who had been fiddling turned into a grewsome beast, with hoofs and a tail, and his attendant sprites were likewise horribly transmogrified.

Two warnings I shall give you in parting. First, take care with fairies always to be on your best behaviour. The dancing elves never leave a bit of money on the cottage hob unless it has been clean swept; therefore always be tidy. The Bwbach never makes the butter for you unless a little basin of cream is left for him beside the churn; therefore be thoughtful for others. The other warning is; do not be disappointed if you never see a fairy in all your Welsh tours; they are very shy of showing themselves nowadays, for the Day of Judgment is near at hand, and they trust by abstaining from tricks of all kinds to fare better than than they else would do.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXI. THE WRITING IN THE BIBLE. (CONTINUED.)

"IN the sermon to which we had listened parallels had been drawn between the rich and poor, to the advantage of those who lived in humble dwellings and worked for their daily bread. It was upon this point that Harold and his friend conversed with the pastor, and drew from him his belief that not only was there greater happiness among the poor, but also higher virtues. It appeared to me as if Harold and his friend were amusing themselves in a light way at the pastor's expense, but the kind old man showed no irritation or impatience; he listened attentively, and replied with dignity and gentleness. Until the discussion was at an end he did not address me; he allowed Harold to have the last word, and then turned his benevolent eyes upon my face. "Young lady," he said, and there was pity in his voice, "it pleased me to see you enter our simple church; come often; you will find comfort in prayer; and if it should happen that you want a friend, one who will counsel you as a father would an erring child, seek me in my home. Any of the villagers will conduct you to it." As he spoke to me, he laid his hand upon my shoulder, with fatherly

kindness, and while we were in this position a young girl very nearly of my own age approached him and stood by his side, calling him "grandfather." With a hasty motion he drew her from me, and with a bow walked away leaning upon the young girl's arm. We looked after him till he was out of sight; he did not turn to look at us again.

"There was something in his action with respect to his granddaughter which pained me exceedingly. It was as though he imagined contact with us would do the young girl harm. And why should he have used the words to me, "who will counsel you as a father would an erring child?" I have done no wrong.

"Harold said he was one of a class of agitators who take pleasure in believing that the rich are systematically corrupt and incapable of goodness. "But give these agitators money," said Harold, "raise their position, and they change their note. Then it is the poor who are vicious, idle, ungrateful. As they are. They serve us and rob us, and we pay them for service and robbery; the balance of virtue is on our side." Harold's friend laughed, and declared that no such balance could exist, because virtue was a myth. "What is right in one man is wrong in another," said this friend; "it really matters very little; it is all one in the end. When fruit lies within reach, where is the hand that will not pluck it?" I neither understood nor liked the conversation, and I was glad when the subject was changed.

"At times everything seems unreal to me. I had to play the hostess, which both gentlemen declared I did very prettily; I could scarcely believe it was I, Clarice, who occupied such a position. It has come about so strangely! It is as if I were in a boat without oars or rudder, drifting along a beautiful stream. For it is beautiful, very beautiful!

"In the evening we walked in the woods, and Harold's friend disappeared. Harold and I were alone, and he spoke to me in tones so tender that I could scarcely find strength to reply. Ah, Marguerite! why do you not come, and take from my heart the weight that oppresses it? Why are you not here that I might whisper in your ear words I dare not write?

"Still no news of Marguerite. Harold has given me money for the pastor to distribute among his poor. "Do not tell him," said Harold, "that it comes from

me; he might think it would bring ill-luck with it." "Why?" I asked. "Why?" repeated Harold; "because, dear child, I believe that in his judgment I am somewhat of a Mephistopheles." The pastor thanked me when I gave him the money, and regarded me with pitying glances. It troubles me to see that look in his eyes; it is always there when we meet. I have tried to make friends with his grandchild, but he has prevented it. He has a kind nature. Why should he be so cruel to me?

* * * * *

"How delicious these summer nights are! Life is very sweet. But one thing is needed to render it perfect—the companionship of my dear sister. "One day—one day," says Harold; "it will come in time. Your sister lives, you tell me. I do not ask you how you know that she lives. It is enough that you say it; I believe it, as I believe everything that comes from your lips. So, one day, when you and Marguerite are together again, you will not have to tell her that you have been entirely unhappy." Harold is wise, and tender, and true. He has not taken your place in my heart, dear Marguerite; no one could do that. But I should miss him sadly if he were to keep away from me now. I have no one else in the world to depend on—to trust in. I trust in him.

* * * * *

"How long is it since I wrote last? Months—years—a lifetime! But time has passed quickly; the summer is gone, and it is now autumn. What has happened in these few months? So much, dear Marguerite, that I could not write it down if I tried. I am wrong; it is told in a few words. I am a happy woman—and Harold's wife!

* * * * *

"For many months I have not written a line of this heart-record. I have not forgotten you sister; I have been in a happy dream.

"Marguerite, let me whisper a secret in your ear. Not to another, no, not to another soul in the world. It is yours and mine—and Harold's. I shall soon become a mother.

"I am filled with wonder, and fear, and sweet delight. This cottage, in which I have passed so many happy months, is for ever sacred to me. My child will be born here.

"Now—now is the time that you

should come to me, Marguerite! To share my joy, to take Harold's hand in yours, and to say to him, "Thank you, brother, for your loving care of my dear Clarice!" To press my child in your arms—how I tremble when I write the words, "My child!" My soul is shaken with a tempest of happiness. My child! My baby! What will she be like? I write "she," for I know it will be a girl. What will she be like? I see her lying in your lap, Marguerite, with laughing eyes looking into yours. And all your troubles are over, as mine have been, except as regards you, dear. Such pretty little hands—the little fingers are on my heart-strings now!—

"Dear Lord of this sweet earth, make me grateful for the blessings you have showered on my life, and let my little baby be like Marguerite! Grant that I may be spared to show my love to both these dear ones, and to Harold, who has behaved so nobly to me!

"Ah, Marguerite, that he should love me, a poor girl—he so high, so faithful, and wise, and I so low, so ignorant, and inexperienced—is it not wonderful?

"He will not be here to-night; he is absent on some great business. So presently, Marguerite, I shall turn down the lights and bring you before me. I have often done so, and yearned to clasp you to my heart. I shall see you standing at a little distance from me, and I shall creep to your side, and place my shadow-baby in your arms. Shadows to-night, but soon to be real, thank God—soon to be real! Ah, Clarice! there lives not on earth a happier woman than you.

* * * * *

"My baby is born. She is a week old, and I am strong enough to sit on the sofa and write a few words slowly, to place with other confessions of mine in my old Bible. What is there written is a heart record, and is for Marguerite when she and I are together again.

"Being alone for a little while I have read over what I have written, and I am glad I had the resolution to continue my confessions—for so I will call them—from time to time. I should have forgotten so many things that Marguerite will like to read.

"My baby is asleep, her winsome face turned to mine. She is now my life—dearer to me than my own, more precious to me than all else in the world. You will not be jealous, Marguerite. When you

have a child of your own—which I pray you may have one day, dear sister—you will feel as I do that life contains no joy so sacred, so beautiful.

“From this moment summer is in my heart. I look at my baby in silent wonder and worship. How sweet is the air—how beautiful the world !

“Harold is not with me so constantly as he used to be. Affairs of importance keep him from me. When I chide him for his absence he says, “The world, child, the world ! There are other duties besides love.” He loves me. Is that not enough ?

“And yet I torture myself. Baby is now six months old, and Harold should notice her more. “I prefer to notice you,” he says to me ; and then he kisses me and talks to me of the world. Is that a reason why men do not love children as women do ? I asked Harold that question, and he answered carelessly : “It may be so. Clarice, be satisfied with things as they are. Do not make troubles ; they come without invitation.” “Trouble will never come to me,” I said, looking fondly into his face, “while you are with me.” He said nothing to this for quite a minute ; he seemed to be thinking of the words. “While I am with you, child !” he then said ; “is that to be for ever ?” “Of course,” I said, “for ever.” He smiled and said : “Well, well, child, enjoy the sun while it shines.”

“My heart is not entirely at rest. But I must not make troubles, as Harold says. Perhaps it is because I expect too much. Marguerite has spoiled me. There never lived a human being so faithful and devoted as my dear sister.

“A cloud hangs over me, and I cannot shake it off. Have I brought it on myself ? What sin, what crime have I committed that my life should be thus darkened ?

“Last Sunday I went to the village church accompanied by baby and my maid. On the way my maid told me that the pastor’s granddaughter was to be married during the week, and a desire to be present at the wedding took possession of me. For a long time the pastor and I have not spoken. It is painful to intrude when one feels one is not welcome, and, as the pastor always appeared to receive me with constraint, I ceased to speak to him, contenting myself with bowing when I met him on my way to or from the church. He invariably

returned my salutation with gentleness, and I sometimes looked attentively at him to see if he was angry with me ; but there was no anger in his eyes—only pity. But why should he pity me ? And why should he be so careful that his grandchild and I should not be friends ?

“I waited at the church door till he came out ; he would have passed me had I not moved towards him, almost entreatingly. At some distance from us stood his grandchild and her lover, who, seeing the pastor stop to speak to me, would have come to us had he not, by a motion of his hand, restrained them. Slight as the action was, I understood it, and the tears rose in my eyes. “Sir,” I said, very humbly, “I have a great favour to ask of you, but you give me no encouragement. If you knew what pain you cause me, you would be kinder to me.” He answered : “I have no harsh thoughts for you, young lady. Ask what you wish ; if it is in my power I will grant it.” “Your grandchild is to be married this week,” I said. “Yes,” he replied, “on Wednesday of this week.” “I hope,” I said, “that she will be very, very happy ! The favour I ask is that you will let me be present at the wedding feast.” He shook his head sadly, and said : “It cannot be ; it cannot, cannot be. We cannot receive you.” He did not move away ; seeing that I was deeply agitated by his refusal, he remained at my side till I spoke again. “It seems so hard to me,” I said, scarcely able to speak for my tears, “that you refuse my friendship. I have done you no wrong ; I am without father or brother or sister. We were like yourselves, poor people, working for a livelihood, and were not despised—indeed, we were not ! By all but one person we were treated kindly, and were everywhere welcomed. My father is dead ; my sister has been torn from me by treachery. I am young, sir, but I have been visited by great misfortune and suffering. That is not a crime ; I should not be blamed for it. I have much to be grateful for, but there is something wanting in my life which should not be withheld from me when I beg for it.” “There is something wanting in every person’s life,” replied the pastor, who appeared to be moved by my words ; “no life is perfect. It would have been better for you had you remained always poor. I grieve for your misfortunes ; you are young to have seen so much, to have suffered so much ; but there is a path in which we must stead-

fastly walk if the esteem of mankind is to be deservedly gained. That path is virtue. Better battle day and night with poverty, better endure the pangs of hunger, better die, than wander out of that path which leads direct to Heaven and happiness hereafter!" I could not at the time grasp the meaning of his speech, it so dazed and bewildered me. "At least, sir," I said, "let me wish your grandchild joy, and press her hand once—but once, in friendship." Again he shook his head. "Even this small thing," he said, "I, whose heart is overflowing with compassion for you, cannot permit to be done. It is my duty to protect those who have no knowledge of the world's sinful ways." With that he moved away, and I walked sorrowfully home.

"In what way have I sinned? "It would have been better for me had I remained always poor!" Does my sin lie at Harold's door, because he is rich? I remember what Harold said of this pastor and of the animosity of his class to those who were higher in worldly station than themselves. Can it be that? No, there is a hidden meaning in the pastor's behaviour to me—a hidden terrible meaning which no one can explain but Harold. I dare not think—I must wait till Harold comes.

"Oh, baby, baby! A little while ago we were so happy! And now——"

* * * *

"After three weeks' absence Harold came to-day. He remained with me but a few hours. I am in despair. Let me endeavour to write what passed between us.

"I related to him what passed between me and the pastor. He listened in silence, never once interrupting me, nor assisting me when I hesitated. His manner was cold and ungracious; I was frightened; I saw that he was angry. When I had finished I asked him if I had done wrong. "Very wrong," he replied; "why do you seek the friendship of such a man or of people in his station?" "There is no other church near," I said timidly; "in God's house all are equal." "Is that one of the pastor's platitudes?" asked Harold. "I have heard my father say so," I answered, "and it came into my mind." "There is no such thing as equality," said Harold, "inside or outside church or any other walls. Some are born to rule, some to obey, and all must fill their stations becomingly. Let the worthy pastor keep to his; I keep to mine. For you, Clarice, you must choose between us, it seems. Well, that is your affair."

"Marguerite, at that moment I was animated by your spirit; a strange courage possessed me. "Harold," I said, "do you no longer love me?" "What a question!" he cried; "of course I love you. But I will not be crossed. Clarice, nothing vexes me more than unnecessary annoyance—unless it is being asked for explanations. Life is too short for explanations. When a lady in whom I am interested sets me up against another person, or sets up another person against me, I must confess to feeling wearied. Life was made for enjoyment." "You would not wish," I said, "that I should be despised." "Why put yourself in the way of being despised?" he said. My courage did not desert me. "Harold," I said, "you must yield to me in this. The pastor's words to me implied that I was not worthy of the friendship of his grandchild, for a reason which I should blush to explain." "I shall not know the reason unless you do explain it, Clarice," he said, biting his lip. "He thinks me unworthy," I said, in a tone of shame, "of the friendship of a pure and innocent girl. It is a humiliation, Harold. The pastor is a good man; give me the means of setting myself right in his eyes." "How can I do that?" asked Harold. "I have no record of our marriage," I said, and was about to proceed when I was stopped by an expression in Harold's face I had never seen there before. "You are aware, Clarice," he said, without any display of anger, although I felt he was exercising control over his feelings, "that there were obstacles in the way of our being married in church." "Yes, Harold," I said, "you told me so." "It was sufficient for you then," he continued; "it should be sufficient for you now. Ours was a civil marriage, privately contracted. Were it in my power—which it is not—to place in your hands what you require, I should decline to do so. I will not have my private affairs exposed to the gaze of strangers. You should be satisfied that I have behaved towards you like a gentleman? If from some cause outside myself or my actions you choose to doubt me, I cannot help it; nor shall I take any steps to disabuse your mind of suspicion. Your course is before you, Clarice; be wise, and choose the right one. You are young and beautiful; you have both sense and discretion; continue to trust me and all will be well. Nothing is to be gained, dear child, I assure you, if you act in opposition to my wishes. You can see

how you have annoyed me ; I am ashamed to present myself to you in any but an entirely agreeable guise. Pardon me, I beg. Never renew this subject ; it will be unkind and injudicious. I will see you again soon, when this little cloud has passed away."

"He left me, and the cloud remains. It will never pass away ! It will hang over my life until I draw my last breath !

* * * *

"Confirmation of my fears has come too soon—too soon ! I am not fit to touch the hand of a pure and innocent girl.

"In a lane near to the cottage in which I live I saw a beggar-woman. She held out her hand ; I had no money to give ; my purse was empty. She raised her face to mine. It was the face of the woman who was given to me as a companion on the day I lost Marguerite, and whom Harold discharged because I disliked her. The moment she recognised me she placed herself before me defiantly. "Oh, my lady," said the woman, "this is where you live ! A pretty hiding-place ! It has lasted longer than I expected ; you must have managed the great man cunningly. How did you manage it ? Tell me. Though I'm too old and ugly to profit by the lesson. And are you together still, or have you replaced him by another ?" I attempted to pass her, but she would not allow me. "You were the cause of my losing a good service," she cried ; "I don't love you for that. You have been the cause of my wanting food ; I don't love you for that. Had it not been for you, I should never have hungered for bread." "I am sorry," I said, and knew not what more to say. The woman's grudge against me was justified, if what she said was true ; and it seemed to be so, for want was in her face. "It is convenient to be sorry when it is too late," she said. "But it is too late for you as well as for me. Your master—" I interrupted her, and demanded to know of whom she was speaking. "Of your master," she repeated. "He would have paid me well but for you ; he would have rewarded me finely, for he is rich and generous, when he has his way. To please you he sent me packing with the barest pittance, and since then not a morsel

of good luck has fallen to my share. All your fault, my lady. Take credit for it ; I set it down to your account. Have you found him out yet, as others have done before you ?" "If you are speaking of my husband," I said, "he will punish you for your wicked words." She laughed loudly. "Husband !" she cried ; "only one lady has ever had the right to call him by that name, and the lady is not you, my pretty one ! You had better have kept me with you ; I could have shown you of what sort of stuff such gentlemen's hearts are made of !—" I stopped to hear no more. Strong as she was, she could not prevent me from escaping, and I flew back to my room, with the horrible words she had uttered burning before me in the air.

"They are true, I feel they are true ! Harold's manner towards me in our last interview proves their truth." And this very morning I received a letter from him—in the fewest words—telling me he was afraid he would not be able to come and see me for many weeks. That means he will not come again.

"The pastor was right. It was his duty, he said, to protect those who have no knowledge of the world's sinful ways. I had such knowledge. Oh, yes ! I, the guilty Clarice, had such knowledge, and to associate with me was to be defiled !

"Oh, Thou all-powerful Lord before whom I shall appear on the Judgment Day, teach me and direct my faltering steps ! Whither shall I fly ? To whom shall I turn ? Marguerite ! Marguerite ! come to me, and let me hide my shame upon your faithful bosom !

"Fly ! I dare not. I must live and face the world. Harold shall do me justice. For the sake of my child, my pretty, innocent child, he shall do me justice. I will go to him, with my child in my arms—

"Come, my dear one. We will start to-night, this very night. You smile at me, now ; one day you will be ashamed to look into my face. When you know the truth you will shrink from the unhappy girl who presses her lips to yours, who kisses your pretty fingers, whose tears stain your sweet face !—

"If at this moment we both could die ! Oh, Marguerite, Marguerite, pity and forgive me !

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXIV. "I BELIEVE HIM TO BE A WORTHY YOUNG MAN."

LADY MARY and Mrs. Finn were alone when the tidings came from Silverbridge. The duke had been absent, having gone to spend an unpleasant week in Barssetshire. Mary had taken the opportunity of his absence to discuss her own prospects at full length. "My dear," said Mrs. Finn, "I will not express an opinion. How can I, after all that has passed? I have told the duke the same. I cannot be heart and hand with either, without being false to the other." But still Lady Mary continued to talk about Tregear.

"I don't think papa has a right to treat me in this way," she said. "He wouldn't be allowed to kill me, and this is killing me."

"While there is life there is hope," said Mrs. Finn.

"Yes; while there is life there is hope. But one doesn't want to grow old first."

"There is no danger of that yet, Mary."

"I feel very old. What is the use of life without something to make it sweet? I am not even allowed to hear anything that he is doing. If he were to ask me, I think I would go away with him to-morrow."

"He would not be foolish enough for that."

"Because he does not suffer as I do. He has his borough, and his public life, and a hundred things to think of. I have got nothing but him. I know he is true—quite as true as I am. But it is I that have the suffering in all this. A man can never

be like a girl. Papa ought not to make me suffer like this."

That took place on the Monday. On the Tuesday Mrs. Finn received a letter from her husband giving his account of the accident. "As far as I can learn," he said, "Silverbridge will write about it to-morrow." Then he went on to give a by no means good account of the state of the patient. The doctor had declared him to be out of immediate danger, and had set the broken bones. As tidings would be sent on the next day she had better say nothing about the accident to Lady Mary. This letter reached Matching on Tuesday, and made the position of Mrs. Finn very disagreeable. She was bound to carry herself as though nothing were amiss, knowing, as she did so, the condition of Mary's lover.

On the evening of that day Lady Mary was more lively than usual, though her liveliness was hardly of a happy nature. "I don't know what papa can expect. I've heard him say a hundred times that to be in Parliament is the highest place a gentleman can fill, and now Frank is in Parliament." Mrs. Finn looked at her with beseeching eyes, as though begging her not to speak of Tregear. "And then to think of their having that Lord Popplecourt there! I shall always hate Lady Cantrip, for it was her place. That she should have thought it possible! Lord Popplecourt! Such a creature. Hyperion to a satyr. Isn't it true? Oh, that papa should have thought it possible!" Then she got up, and walked about the room, beating her hands together. All this time Mrs. Finn knew that Tregear was lying at Harrington with half his bones broken, and in danger of his life!

On the next morning Lady Mary received her letters. There were two lying before her plate when she came in to breakfast, one from her father and the other from Silverbridge. She read that from the duke first while Mrs. Finn was watching her. "Papa will be home on Saturday," she said. "He declares that the people in the borough are quite delighted with Silverbridge for a member. And he is quite jocular. 'They used to be delighted with me once,' he says, 'but I suppose everybody changes.'" Then she began to pour out the tea before she opened her brother's letter. Mrs. Finn's eyes were still on her anxiously. "I wonder what Silverbridge has got to say about the Brake Hunt." Then she opened her letter.

"Oh—oh!" she exclaimed; "Frank has killed himself."

"Killed himself! Not that. It is not so bad as that."

"You had heard it before."

"How is he, Mary?"

"Oh, heavens! I cannot read it. Do you read it. Tell me all. Tell me the truth. What am I to do? Where shall I go?" Then she threw up her hands, and with a loud scream fell on her knees with her head upon the chair. In the next moment Mrs. Finn was down beside her on the floor. "Read it; why do you not read it. If you will not read it, give it to me."

Mrs. Finn did read the letter, which was very short, but still giving by no means an unfavourable account of the patient. "I am sorry to say he has broken ever so many bones, and we were very much frightened about him." Then the writer went into details, from which a reader who did not read the words carefully might well imagine that the man's life was still in danger.

Mrs. Finn did read it all, and did her best to comfort her friend. "It has been a bad accident," she said, "but it is clear that he is getting better. Men do so often break their bones, and then seem to think nothing of it afterwards."

"Silverbridge says it was his fault. What does he mean?"

"I suppose he was riding too close to Mr. Tregear, and that they came down together. Of course it is distressing, but I do not think you need make yourself positively unhappy about it."

"Would not you be unhappy if it were Mr. Finn?" said Mary, jumping up from her knees. "I shall go to him. I should go mad if I were to remain here and know

nothing about it but what Silverbridge will tell me."

"I will telegraph to Mr. Finn."

"Mr. Finn won't care. Men are so heartless. They write about each other as though it did not signify in the least whether anybody were dead or alive. I shall go to him."

"You cannot do that."

"I don't care now what anybody may think. I choose to be considered as belonging to him, and if papa were here I would say the same." It was of course not difficult to make her understand that she could not go to Harrington, but it was by no means easy to keep her tranquil. She would send a telegram herself. This was debated for a long time, till at last Lady Mary insisted that she was not subject to Mrs. Finn's authority. "If papa were here, even then I would send it." And she did send it, in her own name, regardless of the fact pointed out to her by Mrs. Finn, that the people at the post-office would thus know her secret. "It is no secret," she said. "I don't want it to be a secret." The telegram went in the following words. "I have heard it. I am so wretched. Send me one word to say how you are." She got an answer back, with Tregear's own name to it, on that afternoon. "Do not be unhappy. I am doing well. Silverbridge is with me."

On the Thursday Gerald came home from Scotland. He had arranged his little affair with Lord Percival, not however without some difficulty. Lord Percival had declared he did not understand I.O. Us. in an affair of that kind. He had always thought that gentlemen did not play for stakes which they could not pay at once. This was not said to Gerald himself—or the result would have been calamitous. Nidderdale was the go-between, and at last arranged it—not however till he had pointed out that Percival, having won so large a sum of money from a lad under twenty-one years of age, was very lucky in receiving substantial security for its payment.

Gerald had chosen the period of his father's absence for his return. It was necessary that the story of the gambling debt should be told the duke in February. Silverbridge had explained that to him, and he had quite understood it. He, indeed, would be up at Oxford in February, and, in that case, the first horror of the thing would be left to poor Silverbridge! Thinking of this, Gerald felt that he was bound

to tell his father himself. He resolved that he would do so, but was anxious to postpone the evil day. He lingered therefore in Scotland till he knew that his father was in Barsestshire.

On his arrival he was told of Tregear's accident. "Oh, Gerald; have you heard?" said his sister. He had not as yet heard, and then the history was repeated to him. Mary did not attempt to conceal her own feelings. She was as open with her brother as she had been with Mrs. Finn.

"I suppose he'll get over it," said Gerald.

"Is that all you say?" she asked.

"What can I say better? I suppose he will. Fellows always do get over that kind of thing. Herbert de Burgh smashed both his thighs, and now he can move about again—of course with crutches."

"Gerald! How can you be so unfeeling!"

"I don't know what you mean. I always liked Tregear, and I am very sorry for him. If you would take it a little quieter, I think it would be better."

"I could not take it quietly. How can I take it quietly when he is more than all the world to me?"

"You should keep that to yourself."

"Yes—and so let people think that I didn't care, till I broke my heart! I shall say just the same to papa when he comes home." After that the brother and sister were not on very good terms with each other for the remainder of the day.

On the Saturday there was a letter from Silverbridge to Mrs. Finn. Tregear was better; but was unhappy because it had been decided that he could not be moved for the next month. This entailed two misfortunes on him—first that of being the enforced guest of persons who were not, or, hitherto had not been his own friends—and then his absence from the first meeting of Parliament. When a gentleman has been in Parliament some years he may be able to reconcile himself to an obligatory vacation with a calm mind. But when the honours and glory are new, and the tedium of the benches has not yet been experienced, then such an accident is felt to be a grievance. But the young member was out of danger, and was, as Silverbridge declared, in the very best quarters which could be provided for a man in such a position.

Phineas Finn told him all the politics; Mrs. Spooner related to him, on Sundays and Wednesdays, all the hunting details; while Lady Chiltern read to him light literature, because he was not allowed to hold a book in his hand. "I wish it were

me," said Gerald. "I wish I were there to read to him," said Mary.

Then the duke came home. "Mary," said he, "I have been distressed to hear of this accident." This seemed to her to be the kindest word she had heard from him for a long time. "I believe him to be a worthy young man. I am sorry that he should be the cause of so much sorrow to you—and to me."

"Of course I was sorry for his accident," she replied, after pausing awhile; "but now that he is better I will not call him a cause of sorrow—to me." Then the duke said nothing further about Tregear; nor did she.

"So you have come at last," he said to Gerald. That was the first greeting—to which the son responded by an awkward smile. But in the course of the evening he walked straight up to his father. "I have something to tell you, sir," said he.

"Something to tell me?"

"Something that will make you very angry."

CHAPTER LXV. "DO YOU EVER THINK WHAT MONEY IS?"

GERALD told his story, standing bolt upright, and looking his father full in the face as he told it. "You lost three thousand four hundred pounds at one sitting to Lord Percival—at cards!"

"Yes, sir."

"In Lord Nidderdale's house."

"Yes, sir. Nidderdale wasn't playing. It wasn't his fault."

"Who was playing?"

"Percival, and Dolly Longstaff, and Jack Hinde—and I. Popplecourt was playing at first."

"Lord Popplecourt!"

"Yes, sir. But he went away when he began to lose."

"Three thousand four hundred pounds! How old are you?"

"I am just twenty-one."

"You are beginning the world well, Gerald! What is the engagement which Silverbridge has made with Lord Percival?"

"To pay him the money at the end of next month."

"What had Silverbridge to do with it?"

"Nothing, sir. I wrote to Silverbridge because I didn't know what to do. I knew he would stand to me."

"Who is to stand to either of you if you go on thus I do not know." To this Gerald of course made no reply, but an idea came across his mind that he knew who would

stand both to himself and his brother. "How did Silverbridge mean to get the money?"

"He said he would ask you. But I thought that I ought to tell you."

"Is that all?"

"All what, sir."

"Are there other debts?" To this Gerald made no reply. "Other gambling debts."

"No, sir; not a shilling of that kind. I have never played before."

"Does it ever occur to you that going on at that rate you may very soon lose all the fortune that will ever come to you? You were not yet of age, and you lost three thousand four hundred pounds at cards to a man whom you probably knew to be a professed gambler?" The duke seemed to wait for a reply, but poor Gerald had not a word to say. "Can you explain to me what benefit you propose to yourself when you played for such stakes as that?"

"I hoped to win back what I had lost."

"*Facilis descensus Avernii!*" said the duke, shaking his head. "*Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis.*" No doubt, he thought, that as his son was at Oxford, admonitions in Latin would serve him better than in his native tongue. But Gerald, when he heard the grand hexameter rolled out in his father's grandest tone, entertained a comfortable feeling that the worst of the interview was over. "Win back what you had lost! Do you think that that is the common fortune of young gamblers when they fall among those who are more experienced than themselves?"

"One goes on, sir, without reflecting."

"Go on without reflecting! Yes, and where to? where to? Oh, Gerald, where to? Whither will such progress without reflection take you?" "He means—to the devil," the lad said inwardly to himself, without moving his lips. "There is but one goal for such going on as that. I can pay three thousand four hundred pounds for you certainly. I think it hard that I should have to do so; but I can do it—and I will do it."

"Thank you, sir," murmured Gerald.

"But how can I wash your young mind clean from the foul stain which has already defiled it? Why did you sit down to play? Was it to win the money which these men had in their pockets?"

"Not particularly."

"It cannot be that a rational being should consent to risk the money he has himself—to risk even the money which he has not

himself—without a desire to win that which as yet belongs to his opponents. You desired to win."

"I suppose I did hope to win."

"And why? Why did you want to extract their property from their pockets, and to put it into your own? That the footpad on the road should have such desire when, with his pistol, he stops the traveller on his journey, we all understand. And we know what we think of the footpad—and what we do to him. He is a poor creature, who from his youth upwards has had no good thing done for him, uneducated, an outcast, whom we should pity more than we despise him. We take him as a pest which we cannot endure, and lock him up where he can harm us no more. On my word, Gerald, I think that the so-called gentleman who sits down with the deliberate intention of extracting money from the pockets of his antagonists, who lays out for himself that way of repairing the shortcomings of fortune, who looks to that resource as an aid to his means—is worse, much worse, than the public robber! He is meaner, more cowardly, and has, I think, in his bosom less of the feelings of an honest man. And he probably has been educated—as you have been. He calls himself a gentleman. He should know black from white. It is considered terrible to cheat at cards."

"There was nothing of that, sir."

"The man who plays and cheats has fallen low indeed."

"I understand that, sir."

"He who plays that he may make an income, but does not cheat, has fallen nearly as low. Do you ever think what money is?"

The duke paused so long, collecting his own thoughts and thinking of his own words, that Gerald found himself obliged to answer. "Cheques, and sovereigns, and bank-notes," he replied with much hesitation.

"Money is the reward of labour," said the duke, "or rather, in the shape it reaches you, it is your representation of that reward. You may earn it yourself, or, as is, I am afraid, more likely to be the case with you, you may possess it honestly as prepared for you by the labour of others who have stored it up for you. But it is a commodity of which you are bound to see that the source is not only clean but noble. You would not let Lord Percival give you money."

"He wouldn't do that, sir, I am sure."

"Nor would you take it. There is nothing so comfortable as money—but nothing so defiling if it be come by unworthily; nothing so comfortable, but nothing so noxious if the mind be allowed to dwell upon it constantly. If a man have enough, let him spend it freely. If he wants it, let him earn it honestly. Let him do something for it, so that the man who pays it to him may get its value. But to think that it may be got by gambling, to hope to live after that fashion, to sit down with your fingers almost in your neighbour's pockets, with your eye on his purse, trusting that you may know better than he some studied calculations as to the pips concealed in your hands, praying to the only god you worship that some special card may be vouchsafed to you—that, I say, is to have left far, far behind you; all nobility, all gentleness, all manhood! Write me down Lord Percival's address and I will send him the money."

Then the duke wrote a cheque for the money claimed and sent it with a note, as follows: "The Duke of Omnium presents his compliments to Lord Percival. The duke has been informed by Lord Gerald Palliser that Lord Percival has won at cards from him the sum of three thousand four hundred pounds. The duke now encloses a cheque for that amount, and requests that the document which Lord Percival holds from Lord Silverbridge as security for the amount, may be returned to Lord Gerald." Let the noble gambler have his prey. He was little solicitous about that. If he could only so operate on the mind of this son—so operate on the minds of both his sons, as to make them see the foolishness of folly, the ugliness of what is mean, the squalor and dirt of ignoble pursuits, then he could easily pardon past faults. If it were half his wealth what would it signify if he could teach his children to accept those lessons without which no man can live as a gentleman, let his rank be the highest known, let his wealth be as the sands, his fashion unrivalled!

The word or two which his daughter had said to him, declaring that she still took pride in her lover's love, and then this new misfortune on Gerald's part, upset him greatly. He almost sickened of politics when he thought of his domestic bereavement and his domestic misfortunes. How completely had he failed to indoctrinate his children with the ideas by which his own mind was fortified and controlled! Nothing was so base to him as a gambler, and they

had both commenced their career by gambling. From their young boyhood nothing had seemed so desirable to him as that they should be accustomed by early training to devote themselves to the service of their country. He saw other young noblemen around him who at eighteen were known as debaters at their colleges, or at twenty-five were already deep in politics, social science, and educational projects. What good would all his wealth or all his position do for his children if their minds could rise to nothing beyond the shooting of deer and the hunting of foxes? There was young Lord Buttercup, the son of the Earl of Woolantallow, only a few months older than Silverbridge—who was already a junior lord, and as constant at his office, or during the Session on the Treasury Bench, as though there were not a pack of hounds or a card-table in Great Britain! Lord Buttercup, too, had already written an article in *The Fortnightly* on the subject of Turkish finance. How long would it be before Silverbridge would write an article, or Gerald sign his name in the service of the public?

And then those proposed marriages, as to which he was beginning to know that his children would be too strong for him! Anxious as he was that both his sons should be permeated by Liberal politics, studious as he had ever been to teach them that the highest duty of those high in rank was to use their authority to elevate those beneath them, still he was hardly less anxious to make them understand that their second duty required them to maintain their own position. It was by feeling this second duty—by feeling it and performing it—that they would be enabled to perform the first. And now both Silverbridge and his girl were bent upon marriages by which they would depart out of their own order! Let Silverbridge marry whom he might he could not be other than heir to the honours of his family. But by his marriage he might either support or derogate from these honours. And now, having at first made a choice that was good, he had altered his mind from simple freak, captivated by a pair of bright eyes and an arch smile; and, without a feeling in regard to his family, was anxious to take to his bosom the granddaughter of an American day-labourer!

And then his girl, of whose beauty he was so proud, from whose manners, and tastes, and modes of life he had expected to reap those good things in a feminine

degree which his sons as young men seemed so little fitted to give him! By slow degrees he had been brought round to acknowledge that the young man was worthy. Tregear's conduct had been felt by the duke to be manly. The letter he had written was a good letter. And then he had won for himself a seat in the House of Commons. When forced to speak of him to his girl he had been driven by justice to call him worthy. But how could he serve to support and strengthen that nobility, the endurance and perpetuation of which should be the peculiar care of every Palliser?

And yet, as the duke walked about his room he felt that his opposition either to the one marriage or to the other was vain. Of course they would marry according to their wills.

That same night Gerald wrote to his brother before he went to bed, as follows:

"DEAR SILVER,—I was awfully obliged to you for sending me the I.O.U. for that brute Percival. He only sneered when he took it, and would have said something disagreeable, but that he saw that I was in earnest. I know he did say something to Nid, only I can't find out what. Nid is an easy-going fellow, and, as I saw, didn't want to have a rumpus.

"But now what do you think I've done? Directly I got home I told the governor all about it. As I was in the train I made up my mind that I would. I went slap at it. If there's anything that never does anybody any good, it's craning. I did it all at one rush, just as though I was swallowing a dose of physic. I wish I could tell you all the governor said, because it was really tip-top. What is a fellow to get by playing high—a fellow like you and me? I didn't want any of that beast's money. I don't suppose he had any. But one's dander gets up, and one doesn't like to be done, and so it goes on. I shall cut that kind of thing altogether. You should have heard the governor spouting Latin! And then the way he sat upon Percival without mentioning the fellow's name! I do think it mean to set yourself to work to win money at cards—and it is awfully mean to lose more than you have got to pay.

"Then at the end the governor said he'd send the beast a cheque for the amount. You know his way of finishing up—just like two fellows fighting; when one has awfully punished the other he goes up and shakes hands with him. He did pitch into me—not abusing me, not even saying

a word about the money, which he at once promised to pay, but laying it on to gambling with a regular cat-o'-nine-tails. And then there was an end of it. He just asked the fellow's address, and said that he would send him the money. I will say this—I don't think there's a greater brick than the governor out anywhere.

"I am awfully sorry about Tregear. I can't quite make out how it happened. I suppose you were too near him, and Melrose always does rush at his fences. One fellow shouldn't be too near another fellow—only it so often happens that it can't be helped. It's just like anything else—if nothing comes of it then it's all right; but if anybody comes to grief, then he has got to be pitched into. Do you remember when I nearly cut over old Sir Simon Slobody? Didn't I hear about it?

"I am awfully glad you didn't smash up Tregear altogether because of Mary. I am quite sure it is no good anybody setting up his back against that. It's one of the things that have got to be. You always have said that he is a good fellow. If so, what's the harm? At any rate it has got to be.—Your affectionate brother,

"GERALD.

"I go up in about a week."

CHINESE OFFICIALS.

THE Pekin Almanack, a work which is annually published at the metropolis of China by the Emperor's authority, and which unites a Civil Service Guide to an Army and Navy List, enumerated some years ago fourteen thousand magistrates, or, as we call them, mandarins. This computation, however, excludes both the class of military mandarins who officer the army and the fleet of the Celestial Empire, and the host of minor officials too humbly placed to be styled magistrates, and yet forming not an unimportant portion of the dominant caste. The well-known word "mandarin," under which we generally comprehend all office-bearers and authorities in China, is not a Chinese phrase, nor is it understood by the natives. We owe the word to the Portuguese colonists at Macao, who derived it from their own Lusitanian verb "mandar," to command. But the classes we term mandarins the Chinamen describe by the generic name of "khiouping." In the Civil Service there are nine of these grades, rising in a regular hierarchy, each bearing its well-known badge, and invested with a

recognised amount of privilege. No office under Government can be held by other than mandarins; and, great as is the difference between the viceroy of a province, lodged in a palace, surrounded by guards, and all but despotic, and the poor graduate who presides over a canal-side custom-house, they are both members of the reigning aristocracy, and the same ambition is open to each. Nothing can seem fairer at first sight than the Chinese system of dealing out the patronage of government. They have for centuries possessed our method of competing for appointments, but with infinitely less of restriction. Any Chinaman may become a candidate at any age. He does not require to be nominated for examination; he need not be under twenty. It is neither necessary that he should be the protégé of an M.P., nor that a minister should have promised "to do something for him," nor that he should take an early start in the race of life, under penalty of being excluded from it altogether. Moreover it is not, as with us, an established rule that a candidate may have but a single trial. John Chinaman is more considerably dealt with in this respect. If "plucked" he may try again, and yet again. Indeed, there have been many cases in which a dull man has been known to consume his life in periodical attempts to take a degree which he never had wit to attain; while often does a middle-aged dunce, after years of failure, contrive to stumble over the Asses' Bridge at last. No qualification is exacted. The candidates are self-nominated, and the examinations are conducted half yearly. It is merely needful to present a simple testimonial of good behaviour signed by the mayor of the aspirant's commune. This is to prove the candidate a decently-conducted person, not under legal censure for felony, filial impiety, or what is the same thing, treason.

With this exception (and also noting a power on the part of the candidate's father to "forbid the banns," without assigning reasons, a power springing from that tremendous theory of paternal authority, which is the root of all Chinese institutions) any permission to enter into the arena where literary honours are won is wholly superfluous. Nor is an average middle-class Chinaman placed at any disadvantage with reference to the instruction necessary to passing through the ordeal. Education is cheap in the empire. Such stereotyped knowledge as protection retains in the

Central Land, unchanged and unimproved, is widely diffused; and where there are so many to teach, it cannot be very costly to be taught. China swarms with schoolmasters. Most hamlets in the south, and all the large villages in the ruder north, have schools of primary education. These village schools are not at the charge of Government. The masters lead rather a precarious life, boarding alternately with the different farmers and substantial householders, and bartering lessons for rice and samshu. The viceroy may, if he think fit, bestow some small subsidy out of the provincial treasury upon the village schools, and sometimes an endowed pagoda serves for the seminary; in which case the Buddhist priests undertake the duty of rudimentary teaching, receiving a small money payment from the parents of each little scholar. Poorly paid as these schoolmasters are, they are not useless, since a surprising number of even the poorest Chinese are competent to read and write. Then comes the normal school, the expenses of which Government defrays, and in which the curriculum turns entirely upon the studies requisite for passing the official examination. Every capital of a province, called "fou" by the Chinese, has a large seminary of this kind, where many masters are employed, under the supervision of an inspector of education.

In the second-class towns, called technically "tcheou," there is a smaller school, presided over by a sub-inspector. The third order of walled towns, classed under the head of "tsien," contain a minor establishment, with two or more tutors, who are in due time promoted to the central schools. To these normal institutions resort the prize pupils of the village instructors, as well as those luckier young Chinese whose parents have been able to hire private teachers of more extensive attainments. The normal schools impart a knowledge of the sacred books, the rites, as they style the ceremonial rules which regulate every action from the cradle to the coffin, the Confucian Apophthegms, the history of all the dynasties, and the polite art of writing. It is perfectly possible for a diligent youth to go straight from the normal school to the board of examiners, to pass creditably, and come forth qualified for the petty posts under the imperial system, for tide-waiterships and collectorships of salt-excise, and such small deer of office. But if he wishes to mount the higher rounds of the gilded ladder, if he cherish visions of

gold and silver dragons flashing terror from his embroidered vest, of peacock plumage, and gaudy silken banderols drooping on his brocaded shoulders; if he hopes that the proud button of plain red coral will sprout one day on his silken cap, he must go farther afield. Peking contains a kind of university, in which a student may go through a course of the sciences gratuitously, or nearly so, and if he hopes to be a viceroy, a criminal inspector, a prefect, or a censor, he must take another journey, and repair to the University of Moukden in Mantchooria, where he must devote himself to the acquisition of Tartar speech, and the careful study of Mongol peculiarities. He then returns to China Proper, and puts himself under the tutelage of a poet. He has never far to seek for one. There are plenty of lazy or disappointed sons of song, who have failed to pass their own "great go" or second examination, and who are willing to earn a few silver ounces by teaching the way to the Pierian spring. To write sonnets, odes, epithalamiums, elegies, and so forth, is absolutely necessary in China, at least to one who aspires to the highest grades of the literary aristocracy. Without a fluent facility of rhythm, no polite letter-writer is thought perfect nor can any despatch be properly drawn, and very much of a public man's prosperity will depend on the quality of flattery he can administer to his chiefs. Therefore he goes to a poet; and, despite the Latin grammar, a poet can be made, in China at least, where no invention or thought is needful, where there are certain stock similes, certain sonorous periods, a melodious tinkling, and that is all. Originality would nowadays subject a rhymester to be thought a Taiping, or other subverter of authority, and all that is needed is to combine plenty of moons, suns, birds, flowers, and streams in one harmonious web of words. When a student has added poetry to his other acquirements, he knows all that China can teach. He stands the test, and comes through it gloriously, gaining the immediate right to wear a high cap, surmounted by a button or ball as large as the egg of a pigeon, and in this case constructed of copper, gilt and wrought. Our graduate is now a B.L. or bachelor of letters, a member of the ninth class of the order of mandarins, and duly fitted for the humbler posts. But though the successful student is now one of the upper hundred thousand, an elected aristocrat, he does not necessarily receive state pay nor pass into state employ.

There is a "great go" or second ordeal to get through before he can take rank as magistrate, treasurer, sub-prefect, or inspector. Between him and the loftiest situations lies yet another barrier, harder to scale than the two former. True, he has all Chinese learning in his brain, stored away in a crude state; but if he wishes to be a great mandarin he must show the power to apply it. He can learn; can he think? If he hopes to change his ninth-class button for one of those envied top-knots of red coral, he must show an ability to make use of the raw material of knowledge; and as thought is not more active in China than with us, few are those who reach the topmost branches of the tree of preferment. Immense numbers of graduates flinch from the second examination, preferring to vegetate through life in some slenderly paid office, where there is not much to harass and trouble, and where Court favour is less needed, and shameful downfalls less probable. The storm that levels the lofty poplar, they say, spares the humble mushroom at its foot. But there are numbers who fail to obtain even a desk in a Government bureau, or a "snug berth" in the customs, without hope of promotion. These become scribes, poets, parasites, scribes, private tutors, one or all. Every city is full of these poor literary men, dinnerless aristocrats, with pliant backbones and tongues of honey. When a wealthy merchant's son marries another merchant's daughter, they jostle one another, these penniless graduates, as they hurry to present their fulsome stanzas on the happy event. When a rich man dies, and the paid howlers muster around the splendid coffin, a poet presents himself to express the grief of the heirs in mellifluous verse. The bachelors of letters are especially employed "to cram" the sons of wealthy families for examination, and they not only render all the services of a British private tutor, but now and then are said to personate their dear pupil on the awful day of trial, to take his place in the schools, and to receive his "testamur" for apt erudition—a crowning aid, which no Oxford or Cambridge "coach" has ever been known to render to his young friends. These little irregularities are rendered facile by the fact that Chinese examiners have itching palms, and know no salve like silver. A bribe works wonders in convincing the arbiters of the great progress which the student has made in the humanities; and in a country where

the founts of justice are corrupt, it is no wonder that degrees are to be bought. But we must not hastily conclude that the whole system is a make-believe one, and that every degree is a matter of bargain and sale. In practice there is very little purchase, for the very good reason that the candidates have more brains than dollars, and can more easily fag than pay. The mandarins—at least the mandarins of pure Chinese origin—are very seldom members of the opulent classes. It is only out of whim that a rich trader, a merchant prince such as China abounds with, brings up a son to the service of the State. The men of money make their sons supercargoes, commercial travellers, corresponding clerks, and so on. If you ask them why they prefer—they who are rolling in riches, who own fleets of junks, overbrimming warehouses, and wealth untold—to make their sons traders instead of mandarins, they tell you frankly mandarinism does not pay. It is a harassing life, very uncertain, and full of shoals and sunken rocks; even a viceroy may incur a “squeeze,” and it does not fall to everyone’s lot to inhabit a Garden of Flowers, and call the emperor cousin. On this account it is that most of the haughty satraps who sway the destinies of millions are men of very humble origin, not absolutely of the humblest, because the poor and numerous race whom we call “coolies” can seldom contrive to educate their offspring at all. The lettered aristocracy generally springs from obscure little shops, from booths in the suburbs of cities, or from farms where the cultivator tills his field with as clumsy implements and as amazing neatness as his ancestors did when Europe was a tangled swamp. Yeh, for instance, a red button of the first-class, was the son of a petty broker, courtier-marron, as the French style it.

Let us follow our graduate, whom we will suppose to be able and ambitious, on his upward course. Being accomplished in all things, according to Chinese recipes, and having a little money to invest in presents, red note-paper, and dinners, the student soon gets a place. He is, let us say, a deputy’s deputy in the customs, and his duty is to levy toll on the salt from the north, on the tea going to Canton for barbarian tea-pots, on the furs and felts of Tartary. Small, indeed, is his pay, perhaps a dollar a week, hardly enough to purchase the great sheets of letter-paper, crimson, scarlet, or rose coloured, on which he inscribes long-winded compliments to the heads of his

department, to the prefect, the judges, censors, everybody. Well for him, poor fellow, if red paper and florid flattery were all that his superiors required at his hands. Not so. He must make little birthday presents of sweatmeats, fruit, flowers, silken scarfs, and curious handkerchiefs, to fat commissioners and snug inspectors; he must fee their harpies of servants; he must give social suppers, pipes, and drink to their secretaries, messengers, and general hangers-on. All this is out of a poor hebdomadal crown piece. And yet that same dollar should feed and clothe our young mandarin, provide him with fish and rice, tea and arrack, opium and tobacco, and all his little comforts and luxuries. And yet he will live and fatten, and smoke the pipe of contentment, and keep out of debt. Perquisites, as he and his masters well know, do for him what his pay cannot do. Nor is it difficult to screw a trifle from every unofficial person with whom he comes in contact; to insert a dexterous thumb into every pie that passes the customs. The danger is rather in the very facility of extortion. Roguery is permissible in an officer of the emperor—scandal, never! If a complaint be made by any sturdy merchant, or by any troublesome aggregate of smaller men, the mandarin’s gilt copper button does not save him from loss of place. He that is too open in his thefts is no true literate, and unfit to “convey” to his decorous coffers the customary pickings of a mandarin. But a wise graduate will not act thus. Our rising young friend will take so little wool that no shorn sheep shall care to bleat against the shearer. Contenting himself with a little illegal tribute from many travellers, he will thrive. His presents will produce their fruit. He will be promoted to the eighth class, and wear a copper button still, but of another pattern. The same tactics will buoy him up. Good conduct can and will procure him the ball or button of the seventh class, copper also, but peculiarly wrought, gilt and burnished. Good conduct, as the Chinese understand it—that is, decorous, prudent knavery—has brought him thus far; but now succeeds the stumbling-block of a new examination. Being an excellent scholar, and having the best professional help, our young mandarin gets well through, and proudly struts forth in a new and lofty cap, decorated with the sixth-class knob of white stone, generally of milk-white quartz. A sixth-class mandarin is somebody in the land. No longer a mere

subaltern, fetching and carrying for his chiefs, he is now eligible for many posts in the police, the revenue, or the treasury. He is a small magistrate now, has a tiny court of his own, and can bid a dozen red-robed constables, with pheasant feathers in their caps, to unsheath the sword of justice. However, though he may unsheath the sword of justice in terrorem, he is not yet qualified to use it. Capital punishments must be decreed by greater than he. His authority is over the thumbs and backs of the commonality, whom he hangs up by the fingers, or bastinadoes soundly; but he dare not decapitate, and cannot administer even the "cangue," or bamboo pillory, for long periods. Still his motto is *Excelsior*, in a sense of strict worldliness, and he can only rise by friends and patrons. These must be conciliated. Mammon alone can win their good offices in that venal land, and public plunder can alone supply the wherewithal. Nor has a mandarin a means of self-advancement, apart from bribery sustained by extortion. Literature in that learned land of bookworms cannot be made to plump our graduate's purse. Books are esteemed it is true, but not new books. Why have new books where new ideas are voted heresies? The wisdom of their ancestors is all the Chinese care for. Such authors as they have are mere starvelings, despised and neglected; and the writer does not seek a publisher, but a patron, for his smooth verses. Of course, the mandarin of the sixth class cannot condescend so far. He has made his election, and he sits in the seat of Themis, and weighs the arguments—silver ones—on both sides of a dispute. If he escape a scandal, and consequent ruin, he may hope in a year or two to have a new cap, crystal-buttoned this time, and to enter the fifth class. There are some excellent rules respecting mandarins which are worthy of note. No man may be a mandarin holding office in his native place; he may exercise no trade; he is frequently moved from station to station, and he is strictly forbidden to marry any woman belonging to the province where he is on duty. This is a good provision against seditious leagues being formed by powerful satraps in their native district, or in one that had long been their home, and is presumed to guard against the warping of justice to serve local friendships. But venality is worse than partiality; and the tribunals are corrupt enough to gratify that old emperor, second of the Tartar dynasty, who declared that the judges ought

to be iniquitous to check litigation, as otherwise the Chinese would never be cured of dabbling in law. One more promotion, and the cap of our mandarin is bedecked with a button of pale blue. His pay is higher and his chances of speculation greater. Sedulously he applies himself to his future elevation. Another examination must be gone through, and a sort of doctorial degree taken, before he is capable of a loftier flight. This is a hard test, but his good memory and keen wit overcome it; and behold him in the third class, with a great button of transparent blue stone, beryl or sapphire, sparkling on his head-gear. He is fit for much now, but not for all. There are comfortable berths awaiting him, but some of the most tempting baits are still beyond his reach. No more degrees at least! no more cramming of proverbs! He has enough to do to fill his pockets, polish his long curved nails, eat melon seeds between his opium pipes, talk taoli, and write letters. To talk taoli is a great art. As our mandarin rises in life he converses in it more and more fluently. At every step more and more flowery grows his discourse, stuffed with tropes, metaphors, and Delphic ambiguities. As for the letter-writing, it is a pretty sight to see him, brush in hand, painting those symbolic Chinese letters firmly and elegantly with perfumed black or yellow ink on scarlet paper edged with gold leaf.

A third-class official is not yet too grand to write. By-and-by he will have a secretary always at his elbow, but not yet. And a Chinaman writes more letters in a week than we in a year. Our friend is a collector by this, or presides over the tribunal of rites, but it is in a third-rate town, a small place that he hopes soon to leave. Astuteness and industry manage the change. The carved coral button of the second order carries our mandarin to a great city, where a million of human beings shall tremble at his nod. No longer collector or president of rites, he is chief commissioner of treasures and morals, or possibly inspector of crimes. He dwells in a palace now, he has gardens and park; his banquets are superb. None are above him save the viceroy, and it is his turn to have parasites and followers. Still he has a soul above buttons—at least, above carved coral buttons. He fawns and worms his way, and crawls up the gilded ladder to its topmost giddy round. Behold him at the summit of his ambitious dreams—mandarin of the first class, viceroy of a province! On his

cap rises proudly the plain red coral button of the proudest Chinese chivalry. On his breast and back, wrought gorgeously in gold and silver, glitter the imperial arms—the dragon with open jaws. Through what difficulties, what traps and snares, what labyrinths of lies, has he fought his tortuous way! There is something admirable in the pertinacity of the man, however much we despise his roguery and falseness. He was born in a cottage; he sleeps in a grand marble palace, with guards at the gate, with troops of silken attendants within call, with everything rich and fair and bright that China can offer, and money buy, collected round him. Our mandarin is not impeccable, but the standard of Chinese morality is not a high one, and perhaps he is on a par with his neighbours. Will he rest now he has won the goal? Man is not made to rest, and mandarins, even coral-buttoned, are men still. Although our graduate is sure now of something good in the gift of the Downing Street of Peking, he pants for more. It is not enough to be viceroy of a province, governor of a town where barbarians have to be dealt with, or imperial commissioner over one of those subject allies, the bordering kingdoms. It is not enough to have the plain coral globe, and the dragon on breast and back like a jewelled Brazilian beetle. To some favoured mandarins, the emperor grants the right to wear red sashes, yellow caps, and peacock feathers, the proud badges of the imperial family. Our mandarin, the son of a farmer or huckster, wins the day once more, and assumes the marks of Mantchoo royalty, vain as Wolsey of his cardinal's hat. One more distinction the lettered aristocrat is still entitled to. He asks for one of those rare patents of nobility that are only given to high dignitaries. There are five such in the emperor's gift. They correspond with ordinary European titles, and were not improbably copied from them, since their antiquity seems dubious. There is the rank of *koung* or duke, possibly the same as *könig*, or king; *heon*, or marquis; then count, which is *phy* in Chinese; *tze* for baron, much like sneeze in sound; and *nan* for knight. The mandarin so long successful can feel a flutter of hope yet. He draws the great prize. His patent arrives, and it creates him a *koung* or duke, under the emperor's dragon seal, and the signature of the emperor's own vermilion pencil. But the dukedom is not hereditary, any more than

the mandarin. The nobility conferred in China does not go down; on the contrary it goes up. A man's ancestors are ennobled because it is thought monstrous that the son should rank above the father.

The military mandarins are generally Tartars; they have less book-lore, and more rule of thumb, to master. They pass examinations in learning, but more in the use of arms, horsemanship, shooting with the bow, and hurling great stones. The only hereditary nobles are the Tartar princes akin to the emperor; who hold no posts, but vegetate on little pensions, poor relations of the Brother of the Sun and Moon.

DECORATIVE ARTS FOR LADIES.

LADY GWENDOLINE DE COUBROY, by birth and fortune a member of the upper ten thousand, is versed in all the accomplishments of fashionable life. She speaks French and Italian; she sings more or less brilliantly; she plays the pianoforte, the harp, and perchance the zither; she is familiar with the operas of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, and with some of those due to the great German composers; she can criticise the relative merits of Patti and Nilsson, of Trebelli and Smerowshi; she goes to such of the theatres as have abolished the vulgar pit; she knows what it is to spend half the night at balls, private theatricals, and grand parties, and half the day at races, lawn tennis, and driving or riding in the park.

But there are also ladies who are not satisfied to see so much time and fortune spent on such things alone. They may belong to the upper class or the middle class; they may be sisters of some religious body or not; but they are influenced by kind unselfish motives, and find ample scope in the scenes around us for rendering valuable aid. Should orphans and fatherless children be left without any protector succour is provided, perhaps admission obtained into orphanages and asylums. Should the young be neglected by careless or dissipated parents, and left as waifs and strays among the dregs of society, something is done to lift them out of the mire. Should sickness befall either old or young too poor to pay for medical aid, assistance is afforded them. Should poverty press down in a way that the poor laws can hardly reach; or incurable disease of body or mind overtake a hapless person; or inability to work come on through age or infirmities—there

are multitudes of ways in which the admirable women of whom we are speaking come to the rescue.

And there are also numerous ladies, married and single, who have a little time at their disposal which may be tastefully employed in ornamental work at once pleasing and to some extent permanently useful. It is of such that we wish to speak; the arts adverted to are many; but we have five in view, for which tools and materials are sold and directions published.

Potichomania. Whether ending with an *a* or an *e*, this fine-sounding word implies a taste or love for the ceramic art, all kinds of porcelain and pottery, ancient and modern, foreign and English. *Potiche* is the French name for china-jars, &c. Many years ago Chinese and Japanese jars were imitated by making a foundation of wood, and pasting upon it flowers and other designs printed on cloth and cut out; the wood being previously coated with a wash of oil colour, and subsequently varnished. The varnish, however, speedily cracked, and became very unlike the enamel of porcelain. In the more recently introduced art of potichomania glass is substituted for wood, and the flowers printed on cloth are superseded by others printed in colours on gelatinous paper. Varnish is unnecessary for the decoration, as the design is introduced into the inside of a plain but real glass vase, jar, or cup, instead of being externally applied to wood. The glass acts as an enamel, and produces an agreeable effect.

If ladies had to make the various implements and materials for themselves, patience would break down, and failure result; but there are shops where every requisite can be purchased ready for use; glass vases and other vessels, a well selected choice of coloured paper designs, tubes of moist colours for the foundation, hog's-hair brushes and finely-pointed scissors; bottles of unalterable varnish, refined essence of turpentine, a liquid gum, and a vessel in which to dilute the pigments. The gelatinised paper and the designs are intended to imitate not only Japanese and Chinese wares, but those of *Sèvres*, *Dresden*, and other celebrated varieties.

Thus armed at all points the fair artiste is bidden to select the form of vessel and style of adornment according to her taste, and then to cut the paper designs with great care, removing every portion of margin that does not belong to the design

itself. Each portion is then affixed to the interior of the glass by means either of liquid gum or by wetting the gelatinised surface of the paper. Every fragment should be made to adhere closely to the glass, even such minute details as the tendrils of plants and the wings of insects.

Matters are now ready for the varnish. The whole interior of the glass jar, vase, or cup, is coated with a light wash of unalterable varnish, covering the design itself as well as the spaces of clean glass between the smallest portions. Skill and taste are required in the next process, that of applying the colour. This, like the varnishing, is done to the inside of the glass. The colour, in a liquid state, is chosen in tint according to circumstances, and is mixed with varnish or with oil of turpentine. These colours comprise zinc white, cobalt blue, Naples yellow, ultramarine, carmine lake, vermilion, ivory black, Veronese green, yellow lake, raw and burnt sienna, bitumen, marsh violet, gold powder, and a few other pigments, combined according as the finished vessel is intended to imitate China or Japan porcelain, *Dresden* or *Sèvres*. There are two ways of applying the colour, either with a brush, as in ordinary painting, or by pouring the liquid colour into the vessel and emptying out the surplus.

Attend to these orders, and the lady is assured by the experts that she will become a good potichomanist.

Décalcomanie. Whether it be that the French language lends itself more readily than the English to the formation of scientific and artistic terms, or whether it is deemed more fashionable for elegant articles and processes, certain it is that *décalcomanie* is a French word all over. It denotes the art of decorating panels of rooms, china ornaments, cloth and linen fabrics, silken and mixed fabrics, metals, and other surfaces. This is done by a process of transfer, and ladies are credited with the necessary skill to effect it tastefully. Designs of various kinds are printed on specially prepared paper, of such quality that after using it can be removed from the surface of the article by simply dampening the back; that which remains upon the surface of the article is a coloured picture in paint.

All requisites are provided by some of the artists' colourmen—including designs, bottles of prepared cement or gum, varnish, and detergents; a roller, and a piece of leather or cloth; and camel and sable hair

pencils; sponge, ivory knife, scissors, and pincers. Thus furnished, our lady artist proceeds with her work.

The designs are so selected that those which are to be transferred to light surfaces shall appear like an ordinary picture; while those for dark ground are printed with a white or metallic surface. To decorate a porcelain plate, as one example, the margin of the selected design is cut away with scissors, and the remainder coated with the liquid gum by means of the sable-hair pencil. In a few minutes, when the gum is "tacky," the coloured design is placed in its proper position on the porcelain plate, the printed surface downwards. A damp leather or cloth and a roller or ivory knife are used to press the paper well down upon the porcelain. After a brief space of time the paper can be completely removed, leaving the coloured design transferred to the ware. A gentle washing, drying, and coat of varnish finish the dainty work.

If a silken surface is to be decorated instead of porcelain, more care is necessary in damping and some other of the processes. As to decorating dark surfaces, such as rosewood, brown or black silk, or other woven fabrics, japan ware, &c., the difference rests with the printer rather than with the fair *décalcomaniste*. The range of articles that can thus be decorated is considerable—china vases, tea and coffee services of white china or earthenware, screens in white wood, small boxes and card cases in the same material, straw dinner mats, slippers, sofa cushions, scent bags, ribbons, ivory trinkets, &c. A lady skilled in oil or water-colour painting can give delicate little finishing touches to her handiwork occasionally. Panels and doors of rooms likewise come within the reach of *décalcomanie*.

Diaphanie. Another French name here for a graceful lady-like mode of ornamentation—implying a particular style of translucent or diaphanous decoration. Fair amateurs are assured by those who know best that they can soon learn to adorn glass for church, hall, staircase, and conservatory windows, to imitate stained glass, in fact. Designs are specially prepared for this kind of work, and printed in chromo-lithography; these designs should be numerous and varied, but very few working tools are needed.

In arranging the design, the coloured surface is applied to the glass, and when the transfer has been effected the paper

may be easily removed; the design will then appear on the glass, with more or less of the effect of real stained glass. To do this, the plain surface of the paper design is well damped with sponge and cold water; then, turned over, the coloured surface receives a coating of transfer varnish, applied with a flat camel-hair brush. Then, quickly placed on the glass, it is pressed with a roller until every part well appears. The work is left several hours or a day to dry. Next for the transferring. The wet surface of the design is wetted, and the paper gradually rubbed off the glass by means of sponge, cloth, or the hand and fingers; then is left the coloured design on the glass, which, when again dried, receives a thin application of cleaning liquid, followed by one of washable varnish. And so the sheet or pane of glass takes its graceful rank as imitative stained glass.

The artists' colourmen who sell the requisite materials have produced and published two or three hundred designs for subjects, groundings, and borderings, the selection and application of which call for the exercise of taste on the part of the amateur *diaphaniste*.

A second variety of this pretty art consists in painting on ground-glass with varnish, instead of printing on transparent glass by transfer. Many different coloured pigments are required for this, such as raw and burnt sienna, rose madder, brown pink, yellow lake, ultramarine, verdigris, burnt umber, carmine, crimson lake, gamboge, Prussian blue, ivory black, &c. These pigments are all in powder, and are mixed for use with picture copal varnish, diluted if necessary with a little spirit of turpentine. Sable and camel hair pencils and flat brushes are the only other materials required. The print or drawing to be copied is laid down face upwards; a pane or sheet of glass is placed on it, and the outline of the design traced on the glass with a sable pencil dipped in ivory black and varnish. When this is thoroughly dried the glass is raised to a slanting position, with a sheet of white paper beneath it. Then begins the process of painting by copying the colours and details of the original print or drawing. The glass is finally fixed up in its proper place in a window, with the unpainted surface outside.

Another variety consists in painting glass in water-colours—an excellent mode of preparing slides for magic-lanterns. The glass, either transparent or ground, is

first washed with a bit of rag dipped in gall to remove any greasiness. The outline of the design is laid on with a pencil, water-colour, and gall, and coated with mastic varnish. Then the painting is proceeded with as in ordinary water-colours. Small subjects are most effective, as admitting of finish and delicacy.

For some of the above methods of ornamentation when ground-glass is directed to be employed, the effect may be tolerably well produced on imitation ground-glass. To the surface of a pane or sheet of transparent glass a coating of flake white is given, mixed with sugar of lead, oil, and spirit of turpentine, applied with a painting-brush, and dabbed on with the ends of the hairs of a badger-hair brush to give it the granular appearance of ground-glass.

Leather Work. In the absence of any French-looking term for this very pleasing lady-amateur mode of decorating articles of various kinds, we will simply fall back upon the old adage "There is nothing like leather." Madame Emilie de Condé, who has published a useful little work on this subject, says: "A love of the antique led me to devote much time to the examination of the old oak carvings for which Belgium is renowned. There is perhaps no other place in the world in which the carvings in wood equal those of Ghent. In the Cathedral of St. Bavin is the finest known specimen of carving in mahogany." The study of these rare old carvings led her to bring forward a method of producing them in leather, with what result we shall now show.

Basil, or sheepskin leather, is best fitted for this purpose, as little glazed as possible. Besides this leather are required oak stain, the famous Flemish oak stain for imitating the tint of rich old carvings, asphaltum, copal varnish, brushes, wire, moulding or modelling tools, cardboard, gum or liquid glue, burnt umber, spirit of turpentine, a hammer, some black tacks, and scissors. To make a leathern frame, one of deal is procured, and coated with plain oak stain. Cardboard leaves are made by placing real leaves on cardboard, tracing with a pencil, and cutting out with scissors. Oak-leaves, rose-leaves, small vine-leaves, ivy, all are suitable, the fibres being imitated with pen and ink. The leather is cut into pieces of convenient size, soaked in cold water for several minutes, slightly dried on a soft cloth, laid on the cardboard pattern, and the fibres, &c., cut out of the

leather with nicety. Then the leathern imitation leaves are pinched into shape, few natural leaves being quite flat. Stems are imitated by rolling up bits of wire in the soft damp leather.

Next to make a flower, such as a rose, out of these leaves, stems, &c. Five or six small round pieces of leather, varying in size from a farthing to two or three inches diameter, are cut out, placed concentrically (the smallest uppermost), and pierced with a hole; a piece of wire is passed through them and properly secured; the rose is then pinched into form.

And so, by modifying the processes of shaping and cutting out the pieces of leather, stringing them on wire, wrapping the leather on the wire, scalloping the edges of some of them, &c., the lady amateur is told how to produce leathern tulips, fuchsias, hyacinths, jessamine, chrysanthemums, and other flowers. To make grapes, soft thin leather, such as an old kid glove, is cut into pieces, the pieces fitted with dried peas or wooden marbles, and folded closely around them. In this way may be produced floral ornaments in leather to decorate picture and looking-glass frames, brackets, baskets, the edges of tables, &c.

There is no modelling or moulding in the imitative carvings above described; but another variety now calls for brief notice—that of bringing into form by pressure. Here our fair artist is provided with a few blunt-pointed implements to press the leather into crevices and corners, another rounded at the end, and another chisel-shaped. The leather, well soddened in water, is put on the article to be modelled, and gradually worked into all the corners and deeply-cut details by means of the small implements. After being left two or three days to dry, the surface is painted to imitate old oak, with a little diversity of light and shade produced by means of a brush dipped in spirits of turpentine. The modelled or moulded leather being so far finished in form and tint, is nailed upon any frame or other article to be decorated, and washed two or three times with diluted melted size. One or two coats of copal varnish give the final polish.

Paper flower-making. Another of these pleasing graceful arts in which ladies who do not admire idleness can spend a few hours occasionally. Artificial flowers made for the shops constitute a large department of industry; but the subject here treated

is simply producing a fair imitation of flowers in small pieces of paper.

The first point is the selection of paper. Sheets variously coloured may be purchased, as well as small pieces for leaves, buds, and flowers, obtainable in various stages of completeness. A pair of pincers is needed to take up and form the petals and other curved portions of a flower, and a ball-tool to bring the centre of the petal into a hollow form. Ball tools are made of different kinds to suit petals of varied size and shape. Paper of the proper tints is selected, cut, giffered at the edges for some kinds of flower, placed in proper relative positions, and mounted on stalks.

To make a rose, as a typical example, about fifty pieces of paper are prepared, some for the heart, a larger number for the petals which surround it, and a smaller number for the buds. Then, by means of the pincer and the ball tool, the proper crinkling or giffering is imitated. Gum and silken threads are employed delicately to bring the numerous small pieces into the semblance of a rose. If a model or a real rose can be glanced at occasionally as a pattern, so much the better.

And so, varied in details but not in principle, are the modes of making elegant imitations of the moss rose, the pompon rose, the Japan rose, the rose of May, the daisy, the bell-flower, the ranunculus, the camellia, the dahlia, the poppy, the field poppy, the white lily, the pomegranate, the convolvulus, the corn-flower, the tulip, the double laurel, the peony, the heart's-ease, the honeysuckle, the hyacinth, and the sweet pea. If the paper be selected with a due variety of tints, the artiste can exercise her taste in painting or pencilling.

In this way we have indicated briefly five varieties of decorative arts for ladies. It may be worth mentioning that the above details are not intended for those who seek profitable employment for ladies. Many gentlewomen (a pleasant old English word this) are sadly in need of such aids to scanty incomes, if they could be obtained with some readiness, and without a degree of publicity from which gentlewomen would sensitively shrink. This is a large subject which we do not touch on the present occasion. Our purpose has been only to describe a few arts which the feminine members of a family can practice for the graceful decoration of their own homes.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

THE story of Measure for Measure comes from an earlier drama by George Whetstone, Promos and Cassandra, first printed in 1578. This, an unmanageable work in two parts, each containing five acts, was probably not performed. In 1582 the author himself describes it as "never yet presented upon the stage." He converted it, therefore, into a novel, included in a book called *The Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, compressing into a few pages his ten acts and a multiplicity of incidents, songs, and speeches. A story in the *Hecatomithi* of Giraldi Cinthio, first printed in 1565, no doubt furnished Whetstone with the materials of his Promos and Cassandra, after passing into Belleforest's collection of tragic histories. But stories dealing with malefactions such as Angelo, the Lord-Deputy, was guilty of, were very current about the time of Cinthio and in later days. No doubt these narratives were based upon actual occurrences. Villainy like to Angelo's was believed of Olivier le Dain, the barber-favourite of Louis the Eleventh of France, and in Goulart's *Histoires Admirables*, 1628, is attributed now to a Spanish captain in the service of the Duke of Ferrara at Como in 1547, and now to a provost named La Vouste. In these cases, however, the heroine sacrifices herself, not for her brother, but for her husband. It has been told, too, that Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, put to death Rhynsault, one of his noblemen, for some such crime, the event forming the subject of a French play by Antoine Maréchal, called *Le Jugement Equitable de Charles le Hardy*, 1646, and of a paper by Steele in the *Spectator* No. 491. Macaulay has written in defence of Colonel Kirke, against whom similar wickedness was at onetime charged, and the historian mentions the charge brought during the reaction following upon the Jacobin tyranny in France against Joseph Lebon, one of the most odious members of the Committee of Public Safety. After enquiry, however, the innocence of the accused was admitted even by his prosecutors.

Other versions of Cinthio's story are enumerated in Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare*. It is to be noted that Shakespeare has changed the scene from Inspruck, as it stands in Cinthio, to Vienna; whereas Whetstone, both in his play and in his novel, represents the events he sets forth to have occurred at Julio, in

Hungary. Shakespeare introduced the character of the forsaken Mariana to appear as Isabella's substitute and the saviour of her honour. Hallam especially commends the skill of this invention, remarking that without it "the story could not have anything like a satisfactory termination." The critic holds, however, that there is something "a little too commonplace" in the Duke's hint of his intention to wed Isabella; "it is one of Shakespeare's hasty half-thoughts." And while recognising the grand and elevated character of Isabella, Hallam "is disposed to ask whether, if Claudio had been really executed, the spectator would not have gone away with no great affection for her. At least," he concludes, "we now feel that her reproaches against her miserable brother when he clings to life like a frail and guilty being are too harsh." Hazlitt, maintaining the play to be as full of genius as it is of wisdom, yet suggests that there is "an original sin in the nature of the subject, which prevents us from taking a cordial interest in it."

Measure for Measure, first printed in the folio of 1623, is supposed to have been written in 1603. To a statement that the play was represented at Court by the king's players (the company to which Shakespeare belonged) in 1604, no value is now attached.

In February, 1662, at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, Sir William Davenant produced his *Law against Lovers*, an adaptation of *Measure for Measure*, with some new matter of his own, and the characters of Benedick and Beatrice, borrowed for the occasion from *Much Ado about Nothing*; but compelled to utter much dialogue that is not Shakespeare's. The adapter, after the manner of his craft, made many wanton changes in the work; altered, it would seem, simply for the sake of altering. For unknown reasons he thought it well to remove the scene of the comedy from Vienna to Turin.

In 1700, at the same theatre, a second mangled version of *Measure for Measure* was presented. The adapter was one Charles Gildon, whose name has obtained embalment both in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* and in the *Dunciad*.

Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill;
I wished the man a dinner, and sat still.

So Pope wrote of him; and again, grouping him with other kindred obscurities:

Know, Emden thirsts no more for sack or praise;
He sleeps among the dull of ancient days;
Safe where no critics damn, no duns molest,
Where wretched Withers, Ward, and Gildon rest.

He had attacked Pope scurrilously enough in a pamphlet *Life of Mr. Wycherley*, printed by Curl; and in publications called *The Complete Art of English Poetry*, and *A New Rehearsal*, or *Bayes the Younger*, issued in 1714. He had been educated at a Jesuit College, but he subsequently renounced Popery, and for some time advocated infidel opinions. In Boyer's *Political State of Great Britain*, 1711-40, Gildon is described as "a person of great literature, but a mean genius, who, having attempted several kinds of writing, never gained much reputation in any." He was said further to be emulative of the literary style of Nat Lee, for whom he professed great admiration; "but without being possessed of that brilliancy of poetical imagination which frequently atones for the mad flights of that poet. Mr. Gildon's verse runs into a perpetual train of bombast and rant."

In *Measure for Measure*, or *Beauty the Best Advocate*, as Gildon entitled his miserable alteration of the play, the comic characters, Lucio, Elbow, Froth, and the clown Pompey, are wholly suppressed. In lieu, four episodic entertainments of singing and dancing are introduced, the action of the drama meanwhile standing still. Davenant's example is followed, and the scene is laid at Turin; moreover, extracts from the *Law against Lovers* are occasionally inserted in the text without hint of acknowledgment as to their origin. Private marriages are supposed to have united Claudio and Juliet, Angelo and Mariana. The Duke of Savoy, as he is called, becomes a character of minor importance. Of Shakespeare's first act little is preserved. Escalus delivers certain of the speeches of Lucio, and when, at the close of the first interview between Isabella and Angelo, she enquires, "At what hour to-morrow shall I attend your lordship?" he replies, "As soon as the opera is over." This absurdity is repeated in Isabella's second scene with Angelo, when she rejects his infamous proposal. "Consider on it," he says; "and at ten this evening, if you'll comply, you'll meet me at the opera."

New scenes by Gildon are added exhibiting interviews between the Duke and Claudio and the Duke and Juliet. The later incidents are mutilated almost past recognition. Passages of the original are interlarded with quotations from Davenant and scraps by the adapter himself. The Duke does not re-enter in the friar's habit, and much confusion attends the winding-up of the story. The fourth entertainment

of song and dance precedes the fall of the curtain. These curious performances were no doubt imitations of the intermèdes of the French stage, such as *divide*, for instance, the acts of the *comédies-vaudevilles* of Molière. Gildon's adaptation had the support of Betterton as Angelo, and of Mrs. Bracegirdle as Isabella. Verbruggen played Claudio, Berry Escalus, and Mrs. Bowman Juliet. How far this contemptible version of *Measure for Measure* gratified the public of the time cannot now be stated. There is no record of any revival of Gildon's handiwork, nor of any performance of it after the season of its production.

In 1720, still at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the original play seems to have been performed in its integrity for the first time since the Restoration. Isabella was personated by Mrs. Seymour, an admired actress of tragedy; Mr. Quin appeared as the Duke, Boheme as Angelo, Ryan as Claudio, and Charles Bullock as Lucio. *Measure for Measure* enjoyed eight representations, and was reproduced during the following season. The character of the Duke probably suited Quin's histrionic method, which was noted for its oratorical pomp and solemnity. He reappeared as the Duke at Drury Lane in 1738, at Covent Garden in 1742 and in 1746. The Isabella of these performances was the famous Mrs. Cibber; Claudio was played now by Mills and now again by Ryan. The clown was now Joe Miller of jest-book notoriety, and now the popular comedian Hippiesley. Lucio found representation at the hands of Chapman and Theophilus Cibber. At Drury Lane in 1746 the comedy was revived on the occasion of a benefit, when for the first time Mrs. Woffington essayed the part of Isabella, Macklin appearing as Lucio. At the same theatre in 1755 Isabella was again played by Mrs. Cibber; Mossop for the first time appeared as the Duke; Tom Davies, Woodward, and Yates being assigned the characters of Claudio, Lucio, and the Clown.

In 1770, when *Measure for Measure* was again produced at Covent Garden, the words "not acted twenty years" headed the playbills. The occasion was the benefit of Woodward, who resumed the part of Lucio. The actor was a famous representative of vivacious and eccentric comedy, and admired especially for his grace and drollery as a speaking harlequin. The stiff and saturnine Bensley

represented the Duke; the popular Quick played Elbow to the clown of Dunstall; Isabella and Mariana being personated by Mrs. Bellamy and Mrs. Bulkley, actresses much esteemed for their beauty. A later Isabella was the tragic actress Mrs. Yates, who undertook the part at Drury Lane in 1775 for the benefit of King, who personated Lucio, with Smith as the Duke, Palmer as Angelo, and Parsons as the Clown. It may be noted that two years afterwards these four actors found themselves engaged in performing the *School for Scandal*, the original representatives of Sir Peter Teazle, Charles and Joseph Surface, and Mr. Crabtree. In 1780, at Covent Garden, the Isabella was still Mrs. Yates; but Henderson was now the Duke for the first time, with Lee Lewes as Lucio, Wroughton as Claudio, and pretty and clever Mrs. Inchbald as Mariana.

Isabella was the first Shakespearian character assumed by Mrs. Siddons upon her return to the London stage five years after her first season of disappointment and indifferent success. In 1776 a letter from the Drury Lane prompter informed her of her dismissal. In the opinion of the management she had failed completely, and her services were no longer required. It was Garrick's last season. She had made her first appearance in London on the 29th of December, 1775, as Portia, and had subsequently been allotted the characters of Epicene in Coleman's alteration of Ben Jonson's comedy, Julia in the farce of *The Blackamoor Washed White*, Emily in Mrs. Cowley's comedy of *The Runaway*, Maria in Vaughan's farce of *Love's Metamorphoses*, Mrs. Strickland in *The Suspicious Husband*, and Lady Anne in *Richard the Third*. No doubt the actress had not been able to do herself justice; she suffered much from timidity; she was in delicate health, her eldest daughter had been born on the previous 5th of November; and she was at no time qualified for success in comedy. After two performances of Epicene, the part was taken from Mrs. Siddons and given to Lamash, a brisk comedian, the original Trip in *The School for Scandal*. The farce of *The Blackamoor Washed White* was the occasion of something like a riot in the house because of the unpopularity of the author, the Rev. Bate Dudley, editor of the *Morning Post*, at that time a very scurrilous organ. Mrs. Siddons had for rivals at this time in the same theatre such esteemed actresses as Mrs. Yates, Miss Younge, and Mrs.

Abington. With her usual shrewdness and frankness the lady last named, hearing of the proposed dismissal of Mrs. Siddons by the managers, informed them that "they were all acting like fools." Garrick was chiefly occupied with ensuring the success of his own farewell performances. "I found I must not shade the tip of his nose," said Mrs. Siddons some years afterwards. "He did nothing but put her out; he told her she moved her right hand when it should have been her left." Her dismissal was a cruel blow to her. "It was very near destroying me," she writes. "My blighted prospects indeed induced a state of mind that preyed upon my health, and for a year and a half I was supposed to be hastening to a decline. For the sake of my poor children, however, I roused myself to shake off the despondency; and my efforts were blessed with success in spite of the degradation I had suffered in being banished from Drury Lane as a worthless candidate for fame and fortune." She was recalled to Drury Lane in 1782, when she appeared as Isabella in Southerne's tragedy, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm. It was a special triumph. When she withdrew from the scene of reiterated shouts and plaudits, and reached the quiet of her own fireside, she describes herself as half dead from nervous agitation and exhaustion; "my joy and thankfulness were of too solemn and overpowering a nature to admit of words or even tears."

At Drury Lane, in October, 1782, a performance of *The Fatal Marriage* took place by royal command, George the Third and his queen, with the Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal, and the Princess Augusta, honouring the theatre with their presence. In the *London Chronicle* of the 9th of October were duly described the costumes of the illustrious spectators, with particulars of the hangings of gold-fringed velvet, satin, and silk that draped and adorned the royal box. As the Isabella of Southerne Mrs. Siddons obtained universal applause. On the following 3rd of November she appeared as the Isabella of Shakespeare. There had been question it seems whether she could successfully accomplish a Shakespearian character, whether she had courage enough to make the attempt. Her triumph in *Measure for Measure* was, as Campbell writes, "an epoch in her life." He continues: "It is true that in Isabella she had less scope for impassioned acting than in Constance and Lady Macbeth; she had to represent principle more than passion. But

Mrs. Siddons, with that air of uncompromising principle in her physiognomy, which struck one at first sight and was verified by the longest acquaintance, looked the novice of St. Clair so perfectly that I am sure if Shakespeare had seen her among a thousand candidates for the part, he would have beckoned to her to come and perform it. . . . The simplicity of her dress might be described, but not the moral simplicity of her demeanour." Boaden suggests that this her first Shakespearian part after her early discomfiture was selected "as affording some relief to her frame, really exhausted by the dreadful fatigues she had undergone" in the provinces as the representative of the more vehement heroines of tragedy. The royal family attended the second performance of *Measure for Measure*. Smith was still the Duke, and Palmer again played Angelo, with Lee Lewes as Lucio, Brereton as Claudio, and Parsons as the Clown.

In December, 1794, John Kemble appeared as the Duke for the first time, and *Measure for Measure* obtained eight representations. He had some time before revised the play and published an acting edition, which made no serious changes, however, in the original text. Boaden commends the dignity of Kemble's performance, its "venerable propriety and picturesque effect;" and pronounces Mrs. Siddons's Isabella, "a model of cloistered purity, and energy, and grace." He adds: "I have never seen a more perfect delineation. When she afterwards read the play in public she projected this character beyond the rest, perhaps more from the habit of acting it herself than from any designed departure from the equality imposed by reading." Palmer was still Angelo, with John Bannister as Lucio, Wroughton as Claudio, Suett as the Clown, Parsons as Elbow, and Mrs. Powell as Mariana. At Covent Garden in 1803 *Measure for Measure* was even more strongly supported, the bills announcing that the play had not been acted for twenty years. John Kemble and his sister had now the aid of the Angelo of George Frederick Cooke, who undertook the part for the first time, and the Claudio of Charles Kemble; the characters of Elbow, Clown, Barnardine, and Mrs. Overdone, being represented by Blanchard, Emery, Farley, and Mrs. Davenport.

Isabella continued to be one of Mrs. Siddons's most admired impersonations to the close of her professional career, although time and infirmity interfered considerably

with the effect of her later efforts. Much allowance had to be made for the portly Isabella of fifty-five. It was noticed during her last season (1811-12) that when she knelt to the duke in the last act imploring him to spare the life of Angelo, she could not rise without assistance. "This was, of course, given her; but to conceal the real reason, Mrs. Powell, who acted Mariana, was also assisted in rising." Nor was she any longer able in representing the more violent heroines of tragedy to throw herself down upon the stage as she had formerly done, or to undergo the severe physical exertions that had at one time been usual with her. "These things," Geneste notes shrewdly, "may be called stage-tricks, but when judiciously introduced and happily executed they add vastly to the effect produced upon an audience." He adds curiously: "Mrs. Siddons in some particular situations had a look with her eyes which it is hardly possible to describe; she seemed, in a manner, to turn them in her head; the effect was exquisite but almost painful." During her last season she played Isabella seven times. With the exception of Lady Macbeth, which she played ten times, Isabella seems to have been her most attractive character, the number of performances being accepted as a test. Her other characters were Elvira in Pizarro, which she played five times; Mrs. Beverley, in the Gamester, four times; Constance, four; Euphrasia, in The Grecian Daughter, twice; Queen Katharine, six times; Isabella, in The Fatal Marriage, twice; Belvidera, in Venice Preserved, six times; Hermione, four times; Volumnia, four; Mrs. Haller, in The Stranger, twice. In several of her letters she had referred with some impatience to the fatigues incident to her histrionic duties; yet it seems clear that she quitted the stage with regret, and was much impressed as the moment drew near for her to bid a last farewell to her profession. To Mrs. Piozzi she wrote: "In this last season of my acting I feel as if I were mounting the first step of a ladder conducting me to the other world."

Her last performances of Isabella were supported by her brothers John and Charles in the characters they had formerly sustained; by the Lucio of Jones, the Angelo of Barrymore, the Escalus of Murray, with Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Davenport as Mariana and Mrs. Overdone. Blanchard was still Elbow, but Liston was now the Clown in lieu of Emery, who appeared with special success as Barnardine. Geneste, who seems

to have been present, writes: "All the parts were well acted except Angelo; Emery looked and acted admirably." And in the Dramatic Censor of November, 1811, after full recognition of the merits of the chief performers, attention is called to the special qualities of Emery's representation of the "limited and rough character of Barnardine."

Measure for Measure reappeared upon the stage during Miss O'Neill's second season in London, and was represented five times in 1816. John Kemble now resigned the character of the Duke to Charles Young; otherwise Miss O'Neill had the assistance of the performers who had supported Mrs. Siddons as Isabella; Charles Kemble, Jones, Murray, Liston, Blanchard, Emery, and Mrs. Davenport. Miss O'Neill had been received upon her every appearance with something like rapture; the enthusiasm of her audience was without bounds. It may be questioned, however, whether her Isabella was one of her most successful efforts. A critic of the time describes her as "little, if anything, above the middle size; her eyes blue, her hair light; her features expressive, though not strikingly regular; her voice had a mournful cadence in it that, however it might tend to heighten the effect of her tragic scenes, certainly marred her comic efforts; she sings pleasingly," &c. Hazlitt, while recording his hearty admiration of her merits, notes as "the only drawback to the pleasure derived from seeing her, that she sometimes carried the expression of grief or agony of mind to a degree of physical horror that could hardly be borne. Her shrieks in the concluding scenes of some of her parts were like those of mandrakes, and you stopped your ears against them; her looks were of 'moody madness laughing wild amidst severest woe'; and you turned your eyes from them, for they seemed to sear like the lightning. Her eye-balls rolled in her head; her words rattled in her throat. This was carrying reality too far. . . . But these were faults arising from pushing truth and nature to excess; and we should at present be glad to see 'the best virtues' of others make even an approach to them." Of her performance of Shakspearian characters, with the exception of Juliet, Hazlitt has said little. He calmly observes: "We occasionally see something on the stage that reminds us a little of Shakspeare. Miss O'Neill's Juliet, if it does not correspond exactly with our idea of the character, does not degrade it."

He fervidly applauds her efforts as Mrs. Beverley, as Belvidera, and as Isabella in Southerne's tragedy; of her interpretation of Shakespeare's Isabella he says no word.

Measure for Measure offered no temptations to either Edmund or Charles Kean. They took no part in any representation of the play. In 1824 Measure for Measure was performed twice at Drury Lane, when Macready appeared as the Duke, with Mrs. Bunn as Isabella, Liston as Lucio, and Harley as the Clown. Geneste mentions that Liston was "worse than lost in Lucio." Macready writes in his *Reminiscences*: "Kean persisting in his refusal to appear in the plays with me, the repetition of the parts I had before acted, with the performance of the Duke in Measure for Measure, a character in which dignity of demeanour and lofty declamation are the chief requisites, brought me to the end of my engagement," &c. Kean was hard to please; he feared the rivalry of Macready, and he declined further to appear with Mrs. Bunn: he felt dwarfed by her tall figure and stately movements. From Macready's *Journals* it may be gathered that some years later, in 1837, he was still employed in studying the character of the Duke. He writes: "For an hour before I rose I worked at the words of the Duke in Measure for Measure, which I find the most difficult of any part I ever laboured at to fasten in my memory; pursued this same task until I went to rehearsal, and there I continued it," &c.

It was at the second performance of Measure for Measure at Drury Lane in 1824 that the histrionic merits of Mr. Benjamin Webster first attracted the attention of the playgoing public. The actor was possessed of some six years' professional experience, but he had meantime thrice left the stage in despair of arriving at eminence, and employed himself as a bookseller. But a serious attack of ophthalmia prevented Harley from appearing as the Clown, and there was great difficulty in finding a substitute. Suddenly the stage manager, Mr. Bunn, bethought him of a young man who had played many parts for him upon very brief notice during his direction of the Birmingham Theatre. Benjamin Webster was accordingly sent for. But the summons did not reach him until half-past five on the evening of performance. As he himself has related: "When I was told of the circumstance I was horror-struck. I ran to the theatre. No official was there. What was I to do!

'Set to work' was the reply; 'you have done as much before.' But not with Shakespeare and in London. I obtained a very cold reception, but the audience warmed to me at the end of my first scene. At the termination of the great tale Pompey has to tell, three distinct rounds of applause greeted the poor unknown player, and the courage I had screwed up at this point sunk into my shoes, and I could scarcely carry them off. The success was complete; all the great actors came round me. I was led in a sort of triumph to the first green-room, which my salary did not entitle me to enter; and the press pronounced my performance the great hit of the evening." Some two or three seasons passed, however, before the actor was secure of permanent engagements at Drury Lane, and, in the summer, at the Haymarket Theatre.

In 1846 Mr. Phelps produced Measure for Measure at Sadler's Wells, undertaking the part of the Duke, with Mr. Marston as Claudio, and Mr. Hoskins as Lucio; the Isabella at this time being Miss Laura Addison, a young actress of singular promise, remarkable for her physical graces and her fervour of manner. Her career, unhappily, was of brief duration; she died, in 1852, on her voyage from Albany to New York, after fulfilling some few engagements upon the London stage. Her place in Mr. Phelps's company was filled forthwith by Miss Isabella Glyn, whose Isabella ranked among her finest performances, "Miss Glyn," writes a critic in 1848, "threw much enthusiasm into the part of Isabella, which is the most highly coloured of her personations."

Later representations of Measure for Measure have occurred at the Haymarket in 1876 and again in 1878, in order that Miss Neilson might essay the character of Isabella. The lady's performance was pronounced "interesting rather than powerful, graceful rather than intense, unequal in sustained strength, and occasionally, as in the last act, inclined to fade and wane instead of burning with an undimmed light."

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXII. RANF PUTS THE LINKS OF THE CHAIN TOGETHER.

"THOSE were the last words which were written in the Bible, and they wrung my heart with the force of an uttered cry. It

was as though the unhappy girl stood before me, appealing for justice.

"Justice she can never obtain. Revenge may come. Through me? Perhaps. The strange change which has placed her confession in my hands is but part of a design yet to be completed.

"It is not chance; it is destiny.

"After reading the confession, persons and events swarmed in my mind in almost inextricable confusion. Gradually they reduced themselves to something like order. What are the conclusions plainly to be drawn from this tangle of deceit and treachery?

"That Harold and Mauvain are villains? It is no new discovery. From the first I have formed a just estimate of the character of these gentlemen.

"Best to call them gentlemen. Men with a true sense and appreciation of manhood do not systematically betray innocence. Chivalry is not utterly extinct. But men are scarce; gentlemen abound.

"Leontine, my dog, you are to be envied. Better to be a faithful hound than a human being who lives for the pleasure of the hour and cares not who suffers.

"It is really a question which is the higher animal, man or beast.

"What did this scornful sculptor say to Mauvain? 'Nature throws our sins at our doors, and wise men make haste to bury them.' And again: 'The true philosophy of life is the pursuit of pleasure.' Then, indeed, life is a bestial gift, and all that is fair most foul.

"Aye, Harold, you were right when you said that Nature throws our sins at our doors. You may live to prove your words. And I, the hunchback, may open the grave in which you have made haste to bury your cowardly crime. Your haste was premature. Your crime lives, and it may happen that the hour will come when its beauty shall pierce your heart and cause you unutterable pain. Trust me to direct it to that end. So strangely do things come about! In your wildest dreams you could not have imagined that on this lonely snow-clad mount (nearer to heaven than you will ever be) the flight of a hawk after my white dove, thirsting for its innocent blood, should be the means of bringing your villainy to light.

"Clarice and the lady who sought refuge in my mother's hut on the night of the storm are one. By what process of reasoning do I arrive at this conclusion? Unless the point is definitely fixed, all the

circumstances which surround it, in which strange fortune has made me a principal agent, vanish into air.

"Fair in its promise was Clarice's life; most unhappy in its fulfilment. The confession in the Bible proves it; the words of sorrow that fell from the lady's lips in my mother's hut prove it. Clarice had a child; the lady, also—a child who was torn from her, as her sister was. As Clarice's sister, Marguerite, was torn from her. The lady's father was dead at the time the confession was written. Thus, there is as yet no conflicting line in the history of these two lives—which are not two, but one.

"By what means was Clarice's sister torn from her? By treachery. It was a plot planned with skill and cunning; a plot to which I have no clue. And there must have been another hand in it—a hand at present hidden from me. Patience, Ranf, patience; all will be made clear to you in time.

"Between these sisters existed a devoted love. More perfect on Marguerite's side than Clarice's, for in Marguerite's breast beat the stronger heart; she was the guide, the protector. Clarice was a child; Marguerite a woman.

"Hapless Marguerite! Faithful sister! Had fate led you to Clarice in the hour of her delusive dream your honest glance would have pierced its hollowness. Had fate led you to her in the hour of her anguish you would have vindicated her honour and exposed the knave who had betrayed her. I can see Harold shrinking from the indignant looks and words of Marguerite, whom his smooth tongue is powerless to deceive; I can see him turning away, humiliated at the exposure of the trick which destroyed the happiness of an innocent young life.

"By what means was Clarice's child torn from her? By death? No. She lives, and her name is Evangeline.

"In my mother's hut, upon my return from my wanderings, I found the Bible in which Clarice's confession was concealed. All evidence points to the presumption that Evangeline is Clarice's child. In what manner my mother obtained possession of the child and the Bible time may never disclose. Death has placed its seal upon this mystery.

"Conjecture here must find a place; there shall be as few blank spaces in the picture as possible.

"Harold should do her justice, Clarice

declared. It was a cry of despair forced from her suffering soul—an appeal which, in the fruit it should bear, was utterly, utterly hopeless.

"Her grief, her shame, were not for the eyes of those who had attended her in the pretty cage provided for her by her lover. Alone, she, with her child, would traverse the weary road. She crept from the cottage at night, with no thought or knowledge of the difficulties in her way. She suffered—do I not know what she suffered? I, a strong man, inured to hardship, meeting it with scorn, could not avoid the smart of the world's cruelty; how much less Clarice, a weak girl, frightened of shadows, and as poor perhaps as I when she set out on her journey? By her side walked a phantom which all men and women could see, proclaiming her degradation. Near her journey's end her strength gave way, and it was at this point of her career that my mother came across her, and learnt, mayhap, from her fevered lips the story of her shame. What purpose my mother had in her mind when she stole the child it is impossible for me to say. But it appears to me certain that upon Clarice's recovery from her illness she was told that her child was dead.

"Then, childless and heart-broken, she found Harold, and with him Mauvain. She was received with tenderness, for the fatal reason that her child was dead. It is almost incredible that there are in the world men who rejoice in the death of a child.

"I remember when, at Mauvain's request, Harold accompanied me to see the child I claimed as my own that, when his eyes fell upon Evangeline, his face grew as white as death. Did any suspicion present itself to his mind? If it did, he deemed it convenient to set it aside. Awkward complications might arise from such a resurrection in the life of a man who made pleasure the be-all and end-all of his life. 'A man's mind,' he said to me on the ship which conveyed us to the Silver Isle, 'is like a prison-house; there are cells in it whose doors we keep tightly closed until some momentous event forces them open, and lets in the light we dread.'

"Had my mother known as much as I she would have added the name of Harold to those of Mauvain, Ranf, and Evangeline written in the Bible. She may have had a motive in suppressing it; she was a cunning woman; she knew whom to truckle to, whom it paid best to serve.

"An important link has yet to be sup-

plied, and the only person in the Silver Isle who can furnish it is Margaret Sylvester. It is of small moment that in Clarice's confession she calls her sister Marguerite. The resemblance between these two women grows stronger to my mind the longer I dwell upon it. Margaret Sylvester has a child, Gabrielle; between this child and Clarice the resemblance is even more striking; yet I doubt, but for my discovery of Clarice's confession, whether I should have ever regarded it as other than an accidental resemblance.

"I will speak to Margaret Sylvester. I shall not disclose the secret to her, for the present at least. I have reason to be suspicious of all mankind, and were another human being to share my secret, it might be the means of estranging Evangeline from me. I must be cautious, therefore, and learning what I wish to learn, shall keep my own counsel.

"Many of Harold's words recur to me with strange significance. 'I love a woman passionately; another man steps between us and makes me suffer.' Did Mauvain step between him and Clarice? Again: 'No man knows what is before him; and although I shall part from you and our little maid with no definite idea of ever meeting you again, it may happen that our lines of life may strangely cross in the future.' Spoken like a fatalist. Yes, Harold, it may happen, and then the advantage will be on the side of the hunchback you despised.

"I feel stronger and better. To-morrow I shall be able to walk to the lower huts, and to the house—Mauvain's house—in which Evangeline has found a home.

* * * *

"It was good to get out again into the fresh air. My birds and goats and dogs had missed me, I am sure. My dogs leapt upon me and kissed me; my goats rubbed their heads against my legs; my birds came at my call.

"I set the huts in order, and accompanied by Leontine made my way to the stretch of wood that lies in the rear of the house occupied by Margaret Sylvester. There I gave voice to my signal for Evangeline, the song of the lark. Evangeline answered it almost immediately.

"She is growing more beautiful every day, and not less affectionate. It is a week since I saw her, and she was full of a story which she related to me with eagerness. It concerned Joseph Sylvester, Margaret's son.

"These children and Gabrielle are companions, and there is something in the lad's manner which has attracted me to him. His face is frank and honest, and his eyes do not seek the ground when I look at him. I have spoken but a few words to him, and a little while since, upon Evangeline's prompting, I expressed a liking for the lad. She informed him of this, and thereupon an incident occurred which Evangeline was eager to relate to me.

"Evangeline, girl-like, asked Joseph for a proof of his fondness for her; she had no thought of anything serious, but Joseph accepted the question in that light, and laying his left hand upon a stone struck it with all his force with a stout branch, and sorely wounded it.

"It was wicked of me," said Evangeline; "I drove him to it. I asked him to strike as hard as he could, to show me how much he loved me. He struck his hand at once, and it was covered with blood. It must hurt him now, although it was a week ago."

"It was a brave action," I said; "if Joseph would do as much for you when he is a man——"

"He will," quickly interrupted Evangeline; "he said he would like to die for me; but there would be no good in his doing that."

"Unless it were to defend you from an enemy," I said.

"An enemy," exclaimed Evangeline; "why should I have an enemy?"

"You have none on this isle, I am sure."

"Oh, no," she cried, "here everybody loves me, and I know no one else. See—Joseph is there."

"I called the lad to me, and spoke words of praise to him for the pain he had inflicted on himself.

"It was nothing," he said; "Evangeline makes out as if it was a wonderful thing. I would do more than that, without thinking of it."

"He did not speak with bravado; there was a modest firmness in his voice rare in a lad so young.

"Shall we strike up a friendship, Joseph?" I asked.

"His eyes sparkled, and Evangeline pressed my hand.

"I should like to," replied Joseph.

"Let it be so, then," I said; "you and I are friends from this day forth. But if people speak against me—how, then?"

"I would not believe them," said Joseph.

"Examine me well, Joseph; see how

crooked I am—unlike every other man in the isle."

"I like you all the better for it," he said, without hesitation.

"Then my face, my lad. Even in a picture you never saw a queerer face than mine. Think twice; I am not a man to be trifled with. It would be dangerous to give me friendship and withdraw it through caprice. If you pledge yourself, I shall hold you to your pledge."

"I don't know," said Joseph, with a look in his eyes which denoted that he was studying what I said, "whether I understand you or not; but I should be proud of your friendship, and if you give it to me, I will stand up for you and be true to you."

"Oh, then; people speak against me?"

"Yes."

"And think it a strange thing that Evangeline should love me!"

"Yes."

"And invent stories of my life on the snow mountain, and say it is best to have nothing to do with such a man as I!"

"Something like that."

"And in spite of all, you wish to be my friend."

"Yes, if you will let me."

"You must have a reason. Let me know it."

"Evangeline loves you; I love what she loves."

"Give me your hand." He offered me his wounded hand, and I pressed it; he did not wince. "Evangeline is the link between us. It is for her sake I do what I have never done before in my life."

"I heard Evangeline murmur softly to herself, 'I am glad, I am glad!'"

"And now, Joseph," I said, "our compact being made, let your mother know I wish to speak with her."

"Presently the children were gone, and Margaret Sylvester stood before me. The moment she saw me she divined what had escaped the children's notice.

"You have been ill," she said.

"I was moved by the sympathy expressed in her voice.

"I met with an accident," I said, "and am thankful to have escaped with life. I should have been sorry, if it is given to us to rejoice and suffer in another state of being, for I do not want to lose my hold of life till certain things are accomplished."

"The days are peaceful here," she said, with a sigh; "life flows on calmly. During the years I have lived on this isle I have had no sorrows but those which ordinarily

fall to the lot of men and women. One ought to be happy here.'

"You are surely so, Margaret Sylvester. With husband and children who love you, surrounded by plenty, attended by respect and affection, what more can a woman desire?'

"You are right,' she replied; 'it should be sufficient, and I ought to thank God day and night, upon my knees, for a lot so free from care. What was the nature of your accident?'

"I saw a flower on the mountain top; it shone like gold, and I wished to obtain it. That it was out of my reach strengthened my wish, as is usual with human creatures. Attempting to pluck the flower, I lost my foothold, and fell over the precipice. Saved by the branch of a tree which I caught as I rolled down, I managed to crawl to my hut. To such a man as I a few bruises are of small account.'

"While I spoke I was attentively observing her; the resemblance between her and Clarice was unmistakable, although Clarice was formed on a more delicate mould.

"Your life is a lonely one,' said Margaret; 'why do you not come among us and strive to win the love of the islanders?'

"Too late, mistress,' I replied; 'I have no desire for companionship. With my dogs, and birds, and goats, I am perhaps as happy as I deserve to be. There is something on my mind, mistress. It concerns Evangeline. I may open my mind to you.'

"Surely. What have you to say about Evangeline? You will not take her from me!'

"I have no such thought. That wild mountain is well enough for me, but it is not a fit place for a flower so tender as Evangeline. Yet, mistress, I believe I have only to say to her, Come, and she would obey me without question. Content yourself. I am satisfied with the home in which she is growing to womanhood; I am satisfied with your care of her. But I am curious to know why, when we first came to this isle, you were so anxious to receive her. It is not an idle curiosity,

for it leads to another subject I shall presently mention. Why, with children of your own, did you beg that Evangeline should be given into your charge?'

"I need make no secret of it,' said Margaret, with a wistful look; 'she reminded me of one whom I loved.'

"Who was dear to you?'

"Very, very dear,' she replied, with emotion.

"If you remember,' I said, 'on the night I first saw you here I remarked that you were unlike the other women on the isle.'

"I remember.'

"You told me you were not born on the isle, and I asked you to step into the light so that I could see you clearly. But for that inspection it is likely that I should not have consented to allow Evangeline to remain with you.'

"Her curiosity was aroused.

"What was there in me that satisfied you I was a woman to be trusted?'

"Why, mistress, rightly or wrongly, it seemed to me that I had seen you elsewhere—in the old world, where the days were not so peaceful, and where life did not flow as calmly as in this Silver Isle. Here, said I to myself, is a woman who has seen trouble, and knows when quicksands are close by; a woman who has been through the fire, and has not suffered. To such a woman I may safely entrust Evangeline.'

"My words affected her powerfully, and it was a little while before she mustered strength to speak.

"You have seen me elsewhere, you say. Ah! how mistaken you are when you say I have not suffered! It is so long since I have spoken of the old life that the mere mention of it causes me exquisite pain. You have seen me in the old world! Was I alone?'

"No, mistress; you had with you a girl younger than yourself, who looked like your sister. I heard her name mentioned. If I am not mistaken, it was Clarice.'

"Tears flowed down her face as I spoke these words.

"It is true,' she sobbed, and turned away.

"I did not intrude upon her grief. The link was supplied, and the chain is complete.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXVI.—THE THREE ATTACKS.

DURING the following week the communications between Harrington and Matching were very frequent. There were no further direct messages between Tregear and Lady Mary, but she heard daily of his progress. The duke was conscious of the special interest which existed in his house as to the condition of the young man, but, after his arrival, not a word was spoken for some days between him and his daughter on the subject. Then Gerald went back to his college, and the duke made his preparations for going up to town and making some attempt at parliamentary activity.

It was by no concert that an attack was made upon him from three quarters at once as he was preparing to leave Matching. On the Sunday morning during church time, for on that day Lady Mary went to her devotions alone—Mrs. Finn was closeted for an hour with the duke in his study. "I think you ought to be aware," she said to the duke, "that though I trust Mary implicitly and know her to be thoroughly high principled, I cannot be responsible for her if I remain with her here."

"I do not quite follow your meaning."

"Of course there is but one matter on which there can, probably, be any difference between us. If she should choose to write to Mr. Tregear, or to send him a message, or even to go to him, I could not prevent it."

"Go to him!" exclaimed the horrified duke.

"I merely suggest such a thing in order

to make you understand that I have absolutely no control over her."

"What control have I?"

"Nay; I cannot define that. You are her father, and she acknowledges your authority. She regards me as a friend, and as such treats me with the sweetest affection. Nothing can be more gratifying than her manner to me personally."

"It ought to be so."

"She has thoroughly won my heart. But still I know that if there were a difference between us she would not obey me. Why should she?"

"Because you hold my deputed authority."

"Oh, Duke, that goes for very little anywhere. No one can depute authority. It comes too much from personal accidents, and too little from reason or law, to be handed over to others. Besides, I fear that on one matter concerning her you and I are not agreed."

"I shall be sorry if it be so."

"I feel that I am bound to tell you my opinion."

"Oh, yes."

"You think that in the end Lady Mary will allow herself to be separated from Mr. Tregear. I think that in the end they will become man and wife."

This seemed to the duke to be not quite so bad as it might have been. Any speculation as to results were very different from an expressed opinion as to propriety. Were he to tell the truth as to his own mind, he might perhaps have said the same thing. But one is not to relax in one's endeavours to prevent that which is wrong, because one fears that the wrong may be ultimately perpetrated. "Let that be as it may," he said, "it cannot alter my duty."

"Nor mine, Duke, if I may presume to think that I have a duty in this matter."

"That you should encounter the burden of the duty binds me to you for ever."

"If it be that they will certainly be married one day——"

"Who has said that? Who has admitted that?"

"If it be so—if it seems to me that it must be so, then how can I be anxious to prolong her sufferings? She does suffer terribly." Upon this the duke frowned, but there was more of tenderness in his frown than in the hard smile which he had hitherto worn. "I do not know whether you see it all." He well remembered all that he had seen when he and Mary were travelling together. "I see it; and I do not pass half an hour with her without sorrowing for her." On hearing this he sighed and turned his face away. "Girls are so different! There are many who, though they be genuinely in love, though their natures are sweet and affectionate, are not strong enough to support their own feelings in resistance to the will of those who have authority over them." Had it been so with his wife? At this moment all the former history passed through his mind. "They yield to that which seems to be inevitable, and allow themselves to be fashioned by the purposes of others. It is well for them often that they are so plastic. Whether it would be better for her that she should be so I will not say."

"It would be better," said the duke doggedly.

"But such is not her nature. She is as determined as ever."

"I may be determined too."

"But if at last it will be of no use—if it be her fate either to be married to this man or die of a broken heart——"

"What justifies you in saying that? How can you torture me by such a threat?"

"If I think so, Duke, I am justified. Of late I have been with her daily—almost hourly. I do not say that this will kill her now—in her youth. It is not often, I fancy, that women die after that fashion. But a broken heart may bring the sufferer to the grave after a lapse of many years. How will it be with you if she should live like a ghost beside you for the next twenty years, and you should then see her die, faded and withered before her time—all her life gone without a joy—because she had loved a man whose position in life was displeasing to you? Would the ground

on which the sacrifice had been made then justify itself to you? In thus performing your duty to your order, would you feel satisfied that you had performed that to your child?"

She had come there determined to say it all—to liberate her own soul as it were—but had much doubted the spirit in which the duke would listen to her. That he would listen to her she was sure—and then if he chose to cast her out, she would endure his wrath. It would not be to her now as it had been when he accused her of treachery. But, nevertheless, bold as she was and independent, he had imbued her, as he did all those around him, with so strong a sense of his personal dignity, that when she had finished she almost trembled as she looked in his face. Since he had asked her how she could justify to herself the threats which she was using he had sat still with his eyes fixed upon her. Now, when she had done, he was in no hurry to speak. He rose slowly, and walking towards the fireplace, stood with his back towards her, looking down upon the fire. She was the first to speak again.

"Shall I leave you now?" she said in a low voice.

"Perhaps it will be better," he answered. His voice, too, was very low. In truth he was so moved that he hardly knew how to speak at all. Then she rose and was already on her way to the door when he followed her. "One moment, if you please," he said almost sternly. "I am under a debt of gratitude to you of which I cannot express my sense in words. How far I may agree with you, and where I may disagree, I will not attempt to point out to you now."

"Oh, no."

"But all that you have troubled yourself to think and to feel in this matter, and all that true friendship has compelled you to say to me, shall be written down in the tablets of my memory."

"Duke!"

"My child has at any rate been fortunate in securing the friendship of such a friend."

Then he turned back to the fireplace, and she was constrained to leave the room without another word.

She had determined to make the best plea in her power for Mary; and while she was making the plea had been almost surprised by her own vehemence; but the greater had been her vehemence, the stronger, she thought, would have been the duke's anger. And as she had watched the

workings of his face she had felt for a moment that the vials of his wrath were about to be poured out upon her. Even when she left the room she almost believed that had he not taken those moments for consideration at the fireplace his parting words would have been different. But, as it was, there could be no question now of her departure. No power was left to her of separating herself from Lady Mary. Though the duke had not as yet acknowledged himself to be conquered, there was no doubt to her now but that he would be conquered. And she, either here or in London, must be the girl's nearest friend up to the day when she should be given over to Mr. Tregear.

That was one of the three attacks which were made upon the duke before he went up to his parliamentary duties.

The second was as follows : Among the letters on the following morning one was brought to him from Tregear. It is hoped that the reader will remember the lover's former letter and the very unsatisfactory answer which had been sent to it. Nothing could have been colder, less propitious, or more inveterately hostile than the reply. As he lay in bed with his broken bones at Harrington he had ample time for thinking over all this. He knew every word of the duke's distressing note by heart, and had often lashed himself to rage as he had repeated it. But he could effect nothing by showing his anger. He must go on and still do something. Since the writing of that letter he had done something. He had got his seat in Parliament. And he had secured the interest of his friend Silverbridge. This had been partially done at Polwenning ; but the accident in the Brake country had completed the work. The brother had at last declared himself in his friend's favour. "Of course I should be glad to see it," he had said while sitting by Tregear's bedside. "The worst is that everything does seem to go against the poor governor."

Then Tregear made up his mind that he would write another letter. Personally he was not in the best condition for doing this, as he was lying in bed with his left arm tied up, and with straps and bandages all round his body. But he could sit up in bed, and his right hand and arm were free. So he declared to Lady Chiltern his purpose of writing a letter. She tried to dissuade him gently and offered to be his secretary. But when he assured her that no secretary could write this letter for him

she understood pretty well what would be the subject of the letter. With considerable difficulty Tregear wrote his letter.

"MY LORD DUKE,"—(On this occasion he left out the epithet which he had before used)—"Your grace's reply to my last letter was not encouraging, but in spite of your prohibition I venture to write to you again. If I had the slightest reason for thinking that your daughter was estranged from me, I would not persecute either you or her. But if it be true that she is as devoted to me as I am to her, can I be wrong in pleading my cause? Is it not evident to you that she is made of such stuff that she will not be controlled in her choice, even by your will? I have had an accident in the hunting-field and am now writing from Lord Chiltern's house, where I am confined to bed. But I think you will understand me when I say that even in this helpless condition I feel myself constrained to do something. Of course I ask for nothing from you on my own behalf, but on her behalf may I not add my prayers to hers?—I have the honour to be, your grace's very faithful servant,

"FRANCIS TREGEAR."

This coming alone would perhaps have had no effect. The duke had desired the young man not to address him again ; and the young man had disobeyed him. No mere courtesy would now have constrained him to send any reply to this further letter. But coming as it did while his heart was still throbbing with the effects of Mrs. Finn's words, it was allowed to have a certain force. The argument used was a true argument. His girl was devoted to the man who sought her hand. Mrs. Finn had told him that sooner or later he must yield, unless he was prepared to see his child wither and fade at his side. He had once thought that he would be prepared even for that. He had endeavoured to strengthen his own will by arguing with himself that when he saw a duty plainly before him, he should cleave to that let the results be what they might. But that picture of her face withered and wan after twenty years of sorrowing had had its effect upon his heart. He even made excuses within his own breast in the young man's favour. He was in Parliament now, and what may not be done for a young man in Parliament? Altogether the young man appeared to him in a light different from that through which he had viewed the presumptuous, arrogant, utterly unjustifiable suitor who

had come to him, now nearly a year since, in Carlton Terrace.

He went in to breakfast with Tregear's letter in his pocket, and was then gracious to Mrs. Finn, and tender to his daughter. "When do you go, papa?" Mary asked.

"I shall take the 11.45 train. I have ordered the carriage at a quarter before eleven."

"May I go to the train with you, papa?"

"Certainly; I shall be delighted."

"Papa!" Mary said as soon as she found herself seated beside her father in the carriage.

"My dear."

"Oh, papa!" and she threw herself on to his breast. He put his arm round her and kissed her, as he would have had so much delight in doing, as he would have done so often before, had there not been this ground of discord. She was very sweet to him. It had never seemed to him that she had disgraced herself by loving Tregear; but that a great misfortune had fallen upon her. Silverbridge, when he had gone into a racing partnership with Tifto, and Gerald when he had played for money which he did not possess, had degraded themselves in his estimation. He would not have used such a word; but it was his feeling. They were less noble, less pure than they might have been, had they kept themselves free from such stain. But this girl—whether she should live and fade by his side, or whether she should give her hand to some fitting noble suitor—or even though she might at last become the wife of this man who loved her, would always have been pure. It was sweet to him to have something to caress. Now in the solitude of his life, as years were coming on him, he felt how necessary it was that he should have someone who would love him. Since his wife had left him he had been debarred from these caresses by the necessity of showing his antagonism to her dearest wishes. It had been his duty to be stern. In all his words to his daughter he had been governed by a conviction that he never ought to allow the duty of separating her from her lover to be absent from his mind. He was not prepared to acknowledge that that duty had ceased; but yet there had crept over him a feeling that as he was half conquered, why should he not seek some recompense in his daughter's love. "Papa," she said, "you do not hate me?"

"Hate you, my darling?"

"Because I am disobedient. Oh, papa,

I cannot help it. He should not have come. He should not have been let to come." He had not a word to say to her. He could not as yet bring himself to tell her that it should be as she desired. Much less could he now argue with her as to the impossibility of such a marriage as he had done on former occasions when the matter had been discussed. He could only press his arm tightly round her waist, and be silent. "It cannot be altered now, papa. Look at me. Tell me that you love me."

"Have you doubted my love?"

"No, papa, but I would do anything to make you happy; anything that I could do. Papa, you do not want me to marry Lord Popplecourt?"

"I would not have you marry any man without loving him."

"I never can love anybody else. That is what I wanted you to know, papa."

To this he made no reply, nor was there anything else said upon the subject before the carriage drove up to the railway-station. "Do not get out, dear," he said, seeing that her eyes had been filled with tears. "It is not worth while. God bless you, my child. You will be up in London I hope in a fortnight, and we must try to make the house a little less dull for you."

And so he had encountered the third attack.

Lady Mary, as she was driven home, recovered her spirits wonderfully. Not a word had fallen from her father which she could use hereafter as a refuge from her embarrassments. He had made her no promise. He had assented to nothing. But there had been something in his manner, in his gait, in his eye, in the pressure of his arm, which made her feel that her troubles would soon be at an end.

"I do love you so much," she said to Mrs. Finn late on that afternoon.

"I am glad of that, dear."

"I shall always love you, because you have been on my side all through."

"No, Mary; that is not so."

"I know it is so. Of course you have to be wise because you are older. And papa would not have you here with me if you were not wise. But I know you are on my side, and papa knows it, too. And someone else shall know it some day."

CHAPTER LXVII. "HE IS SUCH A BEAST."

LORD SILVERBRIDGE remained hunting in the Brake country till a few days before the meeting of Parliament, and had he

been left to himself he would have had another week in the country, and might probably have overstayed the opening day; but he had not been left to himself. In the last week in January an important despatch reached his hands from no less important a person than Sir Timothy Beeswax, suggesting to him that he should undertake the duty of seconding the address in the House of Commons. When the proposition first reached him it made his hair stand on end. He had never yet risen to his feet in the House. He had spoken at those election meetings in Cornwall, and had found it easy enough. After the first or second time he had thought it good fun. But he knew that standing up in the House of Commons would be different from that. Then there would be the dress! "I should so hate to fig myself out and look like a guy," he said to Tregear, to whom, of course, he confided the offer that was made to him. Tregear was very anxious that he should accept it. "A man should never refuse anything of that kind which comes in his way," Tregear said.

"It is only because I am the governor's son," Silverbridge pleaded.

"Partly so, perhaps. But if it be altogether so, what of that? Take the goods the gods provide you. Of course all these things which our ambition covets are easier to duke's sons than to others. But not on that account should a duke's son refuse them. A man when he sees a rung vacant on the ladder should always put his foot there."

"I'll tell you what," said Silverbridge. "If I thought this were all fair sailing I'd do it. I shall feel certain that I should come a cropper, but still I'd try it. As you say, a fellow should try. But it's all meant as a blow at the governor. Old Beeswax thinks that if he can get me up to swear that he and his crew are real first-chop hands, that will hit the governor hard. It's as much as saying to the governor, 'This chap belongs to me, not to you.' That's a thing I won't go in for."

Then Tregear counselled him to write to his father for advice, and at the same time to ask Sir Timothy to allow him a day or two for consideration. This counsel he took. His letter reached his father two days before he left Matching. In answer to it came first a telegram begging Silverbridge to be in London on the Monday, and then a letter in which the duke expressed himself as being anxious to see

his son before giving a final answer to the question. Thus it was that Silverbridge had been taken away from his hunting.

Isabel Boncassen, however, was now in London, and from her it was possible that he might find consolation. He had written to her soon after reaching Harrington, telling her that he had had it all out with the governor. "There is a good deal that I can only tell you when I see you," he said. Then he assured her with many lover's protestations that he was, and always would be till death, altogether her own loving S. To this he had received an answer by return of post. She would be delighted to see him up in town, as would her father and mother. They had now got a comfortable house in Brook Street. And then she signed herself his sincere friend, Isabel. Silverbridge thought that it was cold, and remembered certain scraps in another feminine handwriting in which more passion was expressed. Perhaps this was the way with American young ladies when they were in love.

"Yes," said the duke, "I am glad that you have come up at once, as Sir Timothy should have his answer without further delay."

"But what shall I say?"

The duke, though he had already considered the matter very seriously, nevertheless took a few minutes to consider it again. "The offer" said he, "must be acknowledged as very flattering."

"But the circumstances are not usual."

"It cannot often be the case that a minister should ask the son of his keenest political opponent to render him such a service. But, however, we will put that aside."

"Not quite, sir."

"For the present we will put that on one side. Not looking at the party which you may be called upon to support, having for the moment no regard to this or that line in politics, there is no opening to the real duties of parliamentary life which I would sooner see accorded to you than this."

"But if I were to break down?" Talking to his father he could not quite venture to ask what might happen if he were to "come a cropper."

"None but the brave deserve the fair," said the duke, slapping his hands upon the table. "Why, if 'We fail we fail! But screw your courage to the sticking place, And we'll not fail.' What high point would ever be reached if caution

such as that were allowed to prevail? What young men have done before cannot you do? I have no doubt of your capacity. None."

"Haven't you, sir?" said Silverbridge, considerably gratified—and also surprised.

"None in the least. But, perhaps, some of your diligence."

"I could learn it by heart, sir—if you mean that."

"But I don't mean that; or rather I mean much more than that. You have first to realise in your mind the thing to be said, and then the words in which you should say it, before you come to learning by heart."

"Some of them I suppose would tell me what to say."

"No doubt with your inexperience it would be unfit that you should be left entirely to yourself. But I would wish you to know—perhaps I should say to feel—that the sentiments to be expressed by you were just."

"I should have to praise Sir Timothy."

"Not that, necessarily. But you would have to advocate that course in Parliament which Sir Timothy and his friends have taken and propose to take."

"But I hate him like poison."

"There need be no personal feeling in the matter. I remember that when I moved the address in your House Mr. Milner was Prime Minister—a man for whom my regard and esteem were unbounded—who had been, in political matters, the preceptor of my youth, whom as a patriotic statesman I almost worshipped, whom I now remember as a man whose departure from the arena of politics left the country very destitute. No one has sprung up since like to him—or hardly second to him. But in speaking on so large a subject as the policy of a party, I thought it beneath me to eulogise a man. The same policy reversed may keep you silent respecting Sir Timothy."

"I needn't of course say what I think about him."

"I suppose you do agree with Sir Timothy as to his general policy? On no other condition can you undertake such a duty."

"Of course I have voted with him."

"So I have observed, not so regularly perhaps as Mr. Roby would have desired." Mr. Roby was the Conservative whip.

"And I suppose the people at Silverbridge expect me to support him."

"I hardly know how that may be. They used to be contented with my poor

services. No doubt they feel they have changed for the better."

"You shouldn't say that, sir."

"I am bound to suppose that they think so, because when the matter was left in their own hands they at once elected a Conservative. You need not fear that you will offend them by seconding the address. They will probably feel proud to see their young member brought forward on such an occasion; as I shall be proud to see my son."

"You would if it were on the other side, sir."

"Yes, Silverbridge, yes; I should be very proud if it were on the other side. But there is a useful old adage which bids us not cry for spilt milk. You have a right to your opinions, though perhaps I may think that in adopting what I must call new opinions you were a little precipitate. We cannot act together in politics. But not the less on that account do I wish to see you take an active and useful part on that side to which you have attached yourself." As he said this he rose from his seat and spoke with emphasis, as though he were addressing some imaginary Speaker or a house of legislators around. "I shall be proud to hear you second the address. If you do it as gracefully and as fitly as I am sure you may if you will give yourself the trouble, I shall hear you do it with infinite satisfaction, even though I shall feel at the same time anxious to answer all your arguments and to disprove all your assertions. I should be listening no doubt to my opponent; but I should be proud to feel that I was listening to my son. My advice to you is to do as Sir Timothy has asked you."

"He is such a beast, sir," said Silverbridge.

"Pray do not speak in that way on matters so serious."

"I do not think you quite understand it, sir."

"Perhaps not. Can you enlighten me?"

"I believe he has done this only to annoy you."

The duke, who had again seated himself, and was leaning back in his chair, raised himself up, placed his hands on the table before him, and looked his son hard in the face. The idea which Silverbridge had just expressed had certainly occurred to himself. He remembered well all the circumstances of the time when he and Sir Timothy Beeswax had been members of the same government; and he remembered

how animosities had grown, and how treacherous he had thought the man. From the moment in which he had read the minister's letter to the young member, he had felt that the offer had too probably come from a desire to make the political separation between himself and his son complete. But he had thought that in counselling his son he was bound to ignore such a feeling; and it certainly had not occurred to him that Silverbridge would be astute enough to perceive the same thing.

"What makes you fancy that?" said the duke, striving to conceal by his manner, but not altogether successful in concealing, the gratification which he certainly felt.

"Well, sir, I am not sure that I can explain it. Of course it is putting you in a different boat from me."

"You have already chosen your boat."

"Perhaps he thinks I may get out again. I dislike the skipper so much, that I am not sure that I shall not."

"Oh, Silverbridge—that is such a fault! So much is included in that which is unstatesmanlike, unpatriotic, almost dishonest! Do you mean to say that you would be this or that in politics according to your personal liking for an individual?"

"When you can't trust the leader you can't believe very firmly in the followers," said Silverbridge doggedly. "I won't say, sir, what I may do. Though I daresay that what I think is not of much account, I do think a good deal about it."

"I am glad of that."

"And as I think it not at all improbable that I may go back again, if you don't mind it I will refuse."

Of course after that the duke had no further arguments to use in favour of Sir Timothy's proposition.

LEARNING TO COOK.

A LESSON ROYAL, PER FAVOUR OF RICHARD THE SECOND.

PARISINA slid into presence, in her most insinuating style.

"A vellum roll," she commenced, using her most airy grace of manner, "written in 1390. A vellum roll, preserved carefully through Henries the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth; through Edwards the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth; through Richard the Third; through Mary. A vellum roll, shown, after the two centuries those reigns consumed, to

Queen Elizabeth; shown by a Lord Stafford, as matter, in the opinion of that courtier, supremely interesting, even all those three hundred years ago, to that lady's imperious and royal eyes. Ah!"

It was thrown in, this expletive, or so it seemed, to entice the listener to comment; but before there was time to speak, Parisina resumed, graceful and insinuating as before, but with the evident determination to say every word she had to say, the grace, the allurements, the insinuation, were resumed.

"A vellum roll," she proceeded, "compiled by King Richard the Second's Chief Maister Cook. A vellum roll, prepared by assent and avisement of King Richard the Second's Masters of Physic and Philosophy; on purpose to teach, craftily and wholesomely, how to make common potages and meats for households, of that monarch's old and far-gone time. Do you understand?"

Certainly. That vellum roll could be quite well imagined. It could be thought of as crabbed, cramped, crooked; as mouldered and smouldered away entirely, in the course of the five centuries that had elapsed by now, since the king's cook had pounced it, and ruled it, and otherwise had it under cookish thumb and finger. Let Parisina be thoroughly assured.

Parisina was thoroughly assured. Her satisfaction, indeed, was splendid; her smoothness magnificent.

"It was a vellum roll," she made known, beaming and triumphant, "showing what English people fed upon in the time of Wicliffe, Chaucer, Gower, the Burgesses of Calais, the Fair Maid of Kent. It was a vellum roll, containing the first record made (as far as is known) of what the early English of any sort had for eating; of how the early English cooked. And it represented far back, and far back, of very truth. For Richard the Second was that bold young boy-king who faced Wat Tyler and Jack Straw at Smithfield; who saw William Walworth, Lord Mayor, strike Wat Tyler down; who rallied the insurrectionists then to come to him, against whom they were arrayed in insurrection; and who saw them all, captivated by his brave young daring, abandon their insurrectionising, and accept his terms of peace. Now, thinking of home-life and kitchen-life in such days, would it not be excellent if the cooking done in those homes and kitchens, and put down in this vellum roll, could be even slightly known?"

Of course. There could be no doubt of it. But as there were no means of getting at the vellum roll, since the vellum roll, it was sure, had perished; and since there were no means, consequently, of knowing what Wicliffe would have been likely to have fed upon, down in his cure at Lutterworth—was there much use in dwelling on what could only lead to tantalisation?

"A-a-ah! A-a-ah!"

Parisina's intense enjoyment took this bland form of long and stretched-out expression. And Parisina let fall her eyelids, and gently shook her head.

"Good," was her cry next, after much revel in this relish. "Good."

"For it happens," she continued, "that the roll of Richard the Second's Maister Cook is not destroyed; that the five centuries it has existed, in white and black and Gothic character, have not brought smoulder, or decay, or any appreciable obliteration. In the stead of this, in 1750 or thereabout, some MSS., long in the family of the Earl of Oxford, were arranged to be sold. Some of these MSS. were bought by a Mr. West; in a few years some of the MSS. were sold to a Mr. Gustavus Brander; in a few years some of these MSS. were looked at by Samuel Pegge the antiquary; in a few moments one of these MSS. was found, to Pegge's tremor of joy and triumph, to be this old cook-roll, *The Forme of Cury*; in a few moments more Mr. Gustavus Brander had given Pegge leave to lay the roll before the public; it was printed, and I have made a study of every word of it, and here my notes are!"

An explanation, this, that changed the aspect of matters certainly. Parisina's topic had unexpected value. She was asked to sit.

"I shall not give you any cookery farther back than this," she said, when she had settled herself comfortably; "because there is no English cookery extant earlier, which makes a finish of it, and is a very good reason too. There is a contemporary manuscript," she added, cooling down to business, "which I shall weave in with King Richard's; but that is all. Unless, indeed, there could be a raking together of historic scraps. And scraps, you know"—with a sparkle—"are not the materials we have found most suitable for dishes of appetising sort.

"So now," the lady began, "to the roll and to what the roller says. He was a judicious man," and her fingers were busy amidst her sheets of paper; and she was

herself judicious in thrusting a pin in and out of them to keep them in numerical order; "he knew life was not made up of banquets and company entertainments, and he begins, simply, with beans. For to make gronden benes, is his own heading; and you shall have it, except in the spelling and a modernised word or two, in his own real form."

That was what was desired. And the matter stood there, authentic; and resting on nothing but what it had intrinsically. "Take beans and dry them in a kiln, or in an oven," said the king's cook; "and hull them, and winnow out the husks, and wash them clean, and put them to seethe in good broth, and eat them with bacon." It was cookery for the poor, the beans and bacon of the nineteenth century cottage, familiar by now, right enough. So was for to make drawn benes; mixed with broth and onions and coloured with saffron for beautification. Then there were turnips, and parsnips, and skirrets; each one in soup, called by the king's cook, potage. For rapes in potage, he says, take rapies (turnips), and wash them clean; square them (cut them into square pieces), parboil them, cut them up, cast them in a good broth, and seethe them; mince onions, cast thereto saffron and salt, and mess it (send it to table) with powder douce. For to make eowtes of flesh, and for to make rice of flesh, are two more of his every-day recipes, to be procured cheaply. Take rice, he says in the last, and wash him clean; put it into an earthen pot with good broth, and let it seethe well; afterwards take almond milk, put it thereto, colour it with saffron, and mess it forth. For eowtes of flesh he wants a great many herbs, as many as ten. Take borage, he says, colewort, langue-de-bœuf, parsley, beet, orach, avens, violet, savory, fennel; when they are sodden, press them very small, cast them in good broth, seethe them, and so mess (or serve) them.

Another dish, small in price and straightforward in construction, was pigs in sage sauce. Take scalded pig, were the king's cook's instructions, quarter it, seethe it in water and salt, take it out, and let it cool. For the sage sauce (good ancestor of the sage and onions associated with pork now) a fourteenth-century housewife was to take parsley, sage, bread, and hard-boiled yolks of eggs. She was to temper these with vinegar (after chopping and crumbling, it may be supposed, though the cooking master must have had a lapse of memory here, for he omits to say so), and then she was

to lay the pig in a vessel, to put the sauce onward, and to serve. Mackerel in sauce, too, is another dish unexpectedly near to what might be seen on a dinner-table to day. Take mackerel, were the orders for it, and smite them in pieces, cast them in water and onions, seethe them with mint and other herbs, then colour it all green or yellow, and send it up. So of stewed pigeons. Take pigeons, it is quietly said by this cook of King Richard the Second's own kitchen, just as if he did not belong to the times of deposed kings, and usurpers, and murders at the throne, and stuff the pigeons with peeled garlick and herbs shred small, then put all in an earthen pot, with good broth, white grease (lard?), powder-fort, verjuice, and salt. In cooking fungus—in modern English, fungus, mushroom, it is the same. Take fungus, the recipe runs, or the nym runs—"nym," in Saxon-English having always stood for receive, or set together, till the Latin-English "recipe" superseded it—skin the fungus, cut them in dice, take leeks, shred them small, and seethe all in good broth, then colour it with saffron, and put thereon powder-fort.

Parisina was impatient here to insert one of her self-imposed enlightenments. "It is of powder-fort and powder-douce," she said. "There is an explanation given of them in Pegge's volume of this old *Forme of Cury*. They ought to be set down, I will say on my own account, as *poudre-forte* and *poudre-douce*, if our good maister cook had only kept to the little French that was in him, and not chopped it up always, in a cooking manner, for stirring in with his King's English; and they were spices—I will say on Pegge's account—or zests, kept in the distillery-room or still-room, ready ground and compounded for use. *Poudre-forte* was a hot or piquant mixture; *poudre-douce* was sweet."

Then Parisina left her little musing or reflection, and gave in the stead of it diligent application to the maister cook's materials. There was gruel of almonds. Take almonds blanched, said the good instructor, bray it with oatmeal, draw them up with water (let them take up as much water as they can), then cast upon it saffron and salt. There were soles in bruet (but this from the MS. contemporary with the king's cook's). Flay the soles, said the writer, wash them, roast them upon a gridiron. To make the bruet, take ground pepper, saffron,

and ale, boil it well, put the soles in a platter, and pour the bruet above. There were sops doree, spelt sowpys dorry, but recognisable as the first set down words, when a few nym's experience and previous hits had brought better comprehension. Onions were wanted for these, which were to be minced small, and fried in wine and almond-milk and oil; then white bread was to be toasted and put into dishes, and the mixture, already hot, poured over. There was lobster, from the same manuscript, and this item copied, just as it stood, by Parisina, to show the style. It was: "To make a lopister. He schal be roasted in his scaly in a ovyne other by the feer under a panne, and etyn with vineger." It was, modernising it (as all the other formes have been modernised): Let it be roasted in its shell in an oven, or else on the hearth among the fire, under a pan; and let it be eaten with vinegar. There was for to make fruturs. Fruturs, as Parisina pointed out, being found to mean fritters, thereby clearing up a matter that wanted clearing up in the 1478 coronation banquet. For these fritters there was to be a batter made; it was to be of flour, eggs, saffron, and ground pepper, then apples were to be pared, and cut the size of "broad-pennies," these were to be cast into the batter, the whole was to be fried in fresh grease, and so "served forth."

"And how would it have done for John of Gaunt to have been treated with such a dish?" said Parisina, to stop the too straight reading and to moralise. "These apple-fritters, for all that they had no sugar in them, but were peppered, must have been what we call now a "sweet"; and John of Gaunt knew sweetmeats from the better side and the ugly side both. Or I can tell you of another nice-sounding little matter—to wit, tartys in applis, otherwise, I suppose, apple-tart. For it there were to be good apples, and pears, and spices, and figs and raisins. These were to be brayed together well; they were to be coloured with saffron, then put into a dish, called at that period a coffin, and thoroughly baked. And how nice to think of King Richard, or to think of his wife Queen Anne, giving orders to this chief maister cook of theirs to prepare sick dainties for 'uncle.' The chief would have had no difficulty on the score of "hands," that is certain; and this you will agree to readily when I tell you the number he had under him. They counted up to as

many as three hundred. Historians are quite certain of it. They have the contemporary testimony of John Hardyng, chronicler and versifier. Says this John Hardyng in his own verse—and, you see, he was always with the people who knew, and who could tell him what they knew :

“Truly I herd Robert Ireliffe say
(Clarke of the greencloth) that the household
Came every day for most part alway
To ten thousand folk, by his messes told,
That followed the house, all as they would.
And in the kechin three hundred servitours,
And in each office many occupiers.

Says John Hardyng, also, going on with his enumeration :

“And ladies faire with their gentilwomen,
Chamberers also, and laundrerres.

Yeomen and grooms, in cloth of silk arrayed,
Satin and damask, in doublets and gowns,
In cloth of green and scarlet.

And think of the lopisters, the soles, the beans, and sops, and potages, and flesh, required for such an unwieldy city-full !”

It was a suggestive picture, undoubtedly ; quite deserving the pause Parisina gave, that it might not be hurried out of admiration.

Then there was sawse madame. It was a puzzle, as some dishes had been before, in its very title, for it was roast goose. Take sage, were the directions for it, parsley, hyssop, savory, garlick, quinces, pears, and grapes ; fill the goose with them ; sew up the hole that no grease come out, and roast it well ; keep the grease that falleth thereof (the first definite allusion, this, found anywhere to dripping), and put it with galantine in a possynet. When the goose is roasted enough, take and smite it in pieces ; put all in a possynet with wine, powder of galingale, powder-douce, and salt ; boil the sauce ; dress the goose in dishes, and lay the sauce onward. There was rosée ; prettiness itself, for surely it should be translated “dew.” To make it the king’s cook orders thick milk with sugar, a good portion of pines, minced dates, ginger, cinnamon, rice flour, and the flour of white roses. Boil these, he says, cool them, salt them, and serve. And if thou wilt, he adds at the foot, in stede of almande mylke, take swete cremes of kyne. There was, also, douce ame. Take good cow’s milk, this ran ; take parsley, sage, hyssop, savory, and other good herbs ; hew them ; put them in the milk, and boil in a pot ; then take capons half roasted ; smite them in pieces ; put thereto pine and honey clarified ; salt it, colour it with saffron, and serve. There

were two admirable notes ; evidently to clear up some point of fourteenth-century dispute, to be set at rest by the king’s cook for ever. Nota, the first of these was, the loin of the pork is from the hip-bone to the head. Nota, was the second, the fylet are two, that are taken out of the pestels.

An opportunity for banter, this seemed, too assailable for Parisina to resist. Parisina, however, had a little piece of history for elucidation, and she let the other matter go.

“Nota,” she said, with only that much of allusion to it, “I wonder which of these foods it was or how many of these foods it was, that made Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent, grow fat ? She was the Princess of Wales, you know ; the Black Prince’s widow, the mother of the king. She was that royal lady who was made to kiss, or be kissed by, Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and their fellow-rebels at Blackheath ; and did she get her corpulency out of sops dorée, rosée, douce ame, and sauce madame ? They sound tempting !

“Again,” she continued, “when this princess’s prince was still her gallant and loving husband, and she was with him in France (for our King Richard, their son, was born during one of these visits, remember, at Bordeaux), her husband took the French king, John, prisoner ; and when he was brought to his pavilion to submit to him, he gave him wine and some of these spices we have been learning about with his own royal hand. In the evening his knightly hospitality led him also to entertain his prisoner at supper ; and led him again to serve him as his karver and sewer, as if he were his own high estate (as Wynkyn de Worde puts it), refusing all entreaties to be seated, and to taste any of the good things himself. Now we cannot tell what were the dishes sent up to this pavilion-banquet, we cannot hear the Black Prince say to King John kindly, as Froissart says he said : ‘Dear sir, do not make a poor meal ; it is true the Almighty has not gratified your wishes,’ and so on ; yet, by means of this cook-roll, we have a great many cookings placed close before us, and we can take our choice.”

Proceeding to do this out of the still unexhausted memoranda, there was one nym that seemed peculiarly likely. Par fait Ypocras, its title ran—par fait being the chief cook’s version of pour faire. It was in French (in similar

French) throughout; it had been tasted and approved of, most probably, in one of these French excursions, and set down as it was learnt, for thorough recollection. "Treys onces de canell," it began, "spykenard de spagn le pays d'un denier;" three ounces of cinnamon, a denier's weight of Spanish spikenard; then—to say it no more as written—of ginger, galingale, cloves, gylofre, long pepper, nutmegs, marjoram, cardamom, paradise seeds, a quarter of an ounce of each (de chescun un quart donce) all to be powdered together. It is no wine, as can be seen; hippocrass, therefore, was a mixture to be put into any wine, to make it still more savoury. There was also, in the way of solids, for to make a froya. Take veal and seethe it well, was the cook's method for this; and probably his froya was, later on, written fraise, since fraise de veau meant a calf's chaldron. Hack it small, he said, then grind bread, pepper, and saffron; put them thereto, fry it, press it well upon a board, and dress it forth. Also there was, for to make longe-de-bœuff; longe being properly langue, and the sturdiness of the chief cook's English tongue being in it palpably. Take the tongue of the ox, he wrote down on his roll, scald it, scrape it well, and boil it. Take a broche (a larding-needle), and lard it well with lardons (small slices of bacon), cloves, and gelofr—the same with gylofre, and both being girofle, a clove of another kind. Then roast it, and while it roasteth baste it with yolks of eggs. Once more. There was a "nym" for lozenges. Put good broth into an earthen pot was the way for it. Take crumbled bread and make a paste of it with water, roll it as thin as paper, dry it hard, then boil in broth. After take grated cheese and lay it in dishes with powder-douce; on it lay the lozenge (i.e., thin paper bread, this wafer, or macaroni, so to speak), laying it as whole as thou canst; then above that lay cheese and powder-douce, then again the lozenge, then again the cheese and powder, and so twice or thrice more, and it may be served. There was Wynkyn de Worde's green sauce, verde sawse, as the chief cook wrote it, a century before De Worde was born, and when the French name was still on it, as imported. For verde sawse, says the chief cook, take parsley, mint, garlick, wild thyme, sage, cinnamon, ginger, wine, bread, vinegar, salt, and saffron, grind it all together, and mess it forth; one dish for which it was to be "messed" being sodden

calf, to be eaten, it may be remembered, after a priest had blessed it, on Easter Sunday. There was also Wynkyn de Worde's sauce gamelyn, the sauce he desires shall be served with egret, crane, and heron. Take currants for it, says the king's cook, take kernels of nuts, crusts of bread, powdered ginger, cloves, cinnamon, bray it well together, temper it with vinegar, and it is ready. There was a salad. Take parsley, says the cook, sage, garlick, chibols, leek, borage, mint, porrette, fennel, cresses, rue, rosemary, purslain. Wash them, pick them, pluck them small with thine hand, mix them with raw oil; lastly lay on vinegar and salt.

"And now," said Parisina, entirely in her own manner, "these directions were written in 1390, as we by this time may very well remember. How, then, do you account for Hume saying, vol. ii, chap. 33, that salads were not produced in England till the end of the reign of Henry the Eighth, say 1540? and that Queen Catherine, when she was in a mind for one, had to send for it to Holland?"

It was not to be accounted for without the deep enquiry such a question merited, and for this enquiry there was no occasion, since Parisina had been through the labour and had her answer compact and glib.

"It was because Hume made a mistake," she said, "or else because the word *salat* must have got twisted round to mean something else in that century and a half. Look at lozenges as an instance of a name being retained and not a fact. Look at apple-tart; look at *blomanger*—spelt by Chaucer *blankmanger*. It was of rice pickled, washed, boiled in good almond-milk, and left to cool; and it was so far of modern *blancmange*-like sort enough. But then the lyres (the livers?) of hens or capons were to be taken, and were to be ground, and cast in with white grease, and to be boiled, and put with blanched almonds and saffron; and all these were to be set into a dish, and to be served forth. In which the dish had gone astray far enough, and it just shows my meaning."

Parisina was drawing to a close now. What few culinary facts she had to illustrate her century she gave, but she gave them briefly. Some were to show how little things had altered in five hundred years. Of these was the certainty that bakers carried bread in baskets about the streets in Richard the Second's time, just as they do now, for Walter Roman, the Lord Treasurer's servant, stole a horse-loaf

out of a baker's basket as he passed by, and caused such commotion in the City it ended in the Mayor being taken prisoner to Windsor Castle, and only being liberated on a grant to the king of ten thousand pounds. Of these also was the certainty that there were women selling oysters and men delivering beer; for the king, the chief cook's master, says of his deposor, Bolingbroke, crowned Henry the Fourth:

Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench,
A brace of draymen bid—God speed him well.

Some facts, on the other hand, were to show how vastly and how happily things have changed. For instance, there was a belief then that the Earl of Arundel's head, struck off on Tower Hill, had grown again to his body, and the chief maister cook's master, the king, to see (and to be confuted), had the poor corpse taken from its grave. For instance again, the people believed that all their children born to them would have only twenty-eight teeth, whereas before the sickness, a few years earlier, everybody had thirty-two. The people believed, too, that fiery lights set the skies in a blaze, and that all the bay-trees in the kingdom withered, to grow green again on a certain day—a legend that Shakespeare knew, for he makes the Welsh captain say:

The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd,
And meteors fright the fixed stars of heav'n.

Beyond doubt, also, the French were landing, and burning Plymouth, Portsmouth, Dartmouth, Rye, Hastings, Gravesend; the king was giving jousts at Smithfield, attended by thirty-four ladies of honour from the Tower, mounted on palfreys, and leading knights by chains of gold. Horses and dogs had to be turned into food, too; and, it was said, even thieves were eating other thieves in prison; there was such famine by these burnings, there was such waste by these lavish jousts and other games.

"And think," cried Parisina, in conclusion, "think that the king, whose chief cook wrote out our cook-roll, the king, whose chief cook described him as the best and royallest vyand—i.e., gourmand—of all else kings, should have lived to have died, at Pomfret, of cruel hunger! He was served there, so the talk of the time went, with costly meat like a king; as we have seen that costly meat was served to kings. He was taken, with ceremonies, to the table, the covers were lifted, the food carved, and then—all the dishes were removed untouched! He was led to the

table to be treated in this wicked Tantalus fashion that last day when his soul rose, and there came the encounter with the mocking grooms and servitors that left him stretched upon the ground, dead. Alas! Well might he be made to say, when looking at himself in a glass:

"Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men!

And well may we think, when looking upon his face ourselves—for it is in Westminster Abbey, remember; the earliest portrait of an English king extant—well may we think of the time when his poor majesty's chief maister cook wrote out this cook-roll, and of the early cooking lesson it has just afforded us!"

TO MY WIFE.

A VALENTINE.

BEAUTIFUL day, oh, beautiful day!
There's not a cloud on the rim of Heaven,
Except to the westward, far away,
Three little islands, rent and riven,
Three little isles of fleecy white
Bathing themselves in the rosy light.
And the wind blows balmy from the South
As it had kissed the Summer's mouth,
And told to all, the heartless rover,
How sweet, how gracious was his lover.
Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful day!
Bright as our bonnie English May;
Yet lacking something—hard to tell—
I know not what—but feel it well,
Present, although ineffable.
Is it that here condemned to roam,
I sigh for the colder skies of home?
Perhaps; yet I am grateful still
For the privilege to breathe at will
This buxom and rejoicing air
That bathes the bright world everywhere;
To see the palms and orange growing,
And nature all her boons bestowing.

Ah, no! not all! 'tis fair to see;
Yet something fails; what can it be
That I, not difficult to please
In the beauty of the grass and trees,
Have found a void, ye lovely hours,
In the fair splendour of the bowers?

Unsatisfied! unsatisfied!
I miss the white amid the green;
I miss the flowers—the daisies pied,
And cowslips peering up between;
I miss the song of the twinkling lark—
Soaring, soaring, and singing ever,
From the dawning till the dark,
The song unborn of an endeavour,
But gushing from his happy voice
As freely as from morning sun,
The light that bids the world rejoice
In the new gladness begun.

All these I miss this pleasant day;
All these and something more divine—
Thy smile, dear Nelly, far away,
Thy hand, sweetheart, to clasp in mine;
The voice oft heard from lips of thine,
That breathes the words 'tis joy to hear
Even in remembrance. Wanting these
I bless the skies so balmy clear,
The health and gladness on the breeze;
But miss my joy beyond the sea,
And pine for England and for thee.

A SUN-PICTURE.

A STORY IN FOUR PARTS. PART I.

"H'M!—an uncommonly nice little girl. Wonder who she is. By Jove! lively sort of place to live in!"

These remarks coursed gently through the brain—for no one that I ever heard of soliloquises out of print—of a young gentleman leaning on a garden wall.

Neither the face nor the figure of the thinker suggested the habit of speculative thought.

The forehead was broad, not high; the nose rather prominent and narrow than broad and cogitative; the eye bright and indolent rather than thoughtful and dreamy; the mouth—well, the mouth left one in doubt, for it was heavily moustached; while the chin, relieved from heaviness by the clear chiselling of its parts, spoke to the physiognomist unutterable things. The figure, broad-chested, narrow-hipped, powerful yet lithe, hinted at action rather than repose; while just then the attitude was almost listless in its abandonment.

For the rest, the outer man was of tweed and cut of the latest date, while a book was thrust under one arm, and a cloud of pale blue smoke from a meerschaum pipe rose gently in the warm September air.

The above speculations were therefore not born of the inner consciousness, but prompted by a concrete object, and by an object, it would seem, on the other side of the garden wall.

A large square enclosure it was with fine old trees, knotted and gnarled, their branches entangled, growing as they listed; the daisies flourishing in the grass, the moss and lichen robbing the old red-brick walls of their ruddy colour. That was what he saw. Chickens clucked and pecked on the winding paths—paths that had got picturesquely mixed up with the grass, so that one could scarcely say where one began and the other ended. The box-trees, as if angry at their long restraint, now stretched boisterously across the beds, crushing the low-lying marigold and snap-dragon at their roots. High up waved the little yellow flower of the straggling sow-thistle nodding to the great globe-thistle beneath. There was the rare blood-red lobelia up against the little lilac phlox. Hard-by the purple clematis clung to a broken trellis, while the stately golden sun-flowers lifted their warm hearts to the sun.

In the tangle of this forsaken garden stood a slender little maid.

Hatless, jacketless, flounceless, was she; the little black frock was torn and skimpy, the shoes worn and shabby. Her appearance altogether was as neglected as her surroundings. The afternoon sun, beginning to throw long shadows on the grass, set the little red head in a glow of light, lit up the warm whiteness of the throat, the rosy, smiling parted lips, the smooth round cheeks, the lurking greenness in her deep-set eyes. A slender dimpled wrist, and a hand, long, firm, and tapering, were stretched up among the sun-flowers. The golden cup bent to the eager fingers. She handled it lovingly; then suddenly freakishly bowing to the sun-flowers, placed the great flower reversed cap-wise on her head.

She was as unconsciously artless as a figure from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Raising her shabby frock on either side, she again bowed solemnly, this time to an imaginary partner, and proceeded to execute a grave little improvised dance. She moved to and fro, softly humming to herself, until she suddenly, and for the first time, caught sight of a stranger leaning on the wall.

"Oh-h-h!" exclaimed the girl, the sun-flower cap falling off her head as she rushed off, darting one fiery glance at the intruder.

It is curious how even our best efforts fail in their fulfilment. Our facetious attempts often invite small scorn, while our most righteous wrath is successful only in producing mirth.

In the present instance, for example, the young gentleman appeared in no wise disconcerted, but, on the other hand, seemed to watch with some interest the pathway that had swallowed up the fair dancer.

Later on the maid-of-all-work, who had been induced by her little mistress to take her place in feeding the chickens, declared she saw some one jump over the wall as she came out into the garden.

"But there, miss," she remarked, "there's no keeping out them boys."

Little Nona Newnham was an orphan, and the eldest of six.

Mrs. Newnham had passed the first seventeen years of existence in that placid uneventful fashion usual to small minds. She had been roused to astonishment, perhaps for the first time, when the Rev. Mr. Newnham intimated a desire for her neutral-tinted companionship as a not inharmonious accompaniment in a vale of tears. It had been a source of unparalleled joy to the bride that she had been proposed to and married before her three elder, and

withal handsomer, sisters were unplucked, so to speak, from their virgin stalk.

But, alas ! the uninterrupted contemplation of this triumph had paled during the course of years, and left Mrs. Newnham joyless as heretofore. For time, who heals our sorrows, deadens even a joy like this.

One sister ere long had died, another had gone to Australia. The third made a much better match than herself, and kept—the fact, indeed, was alluded to more in sorrow than in anger, implying something of a loss in moral elevation—her own carriage.

When the Rev. Mr. Newnham died at the early age of thirty-six, and dissolved partnership, his survivor found herself compelled to face the situation, and make the best of the diminutive fortune and large family that had been spared to her. And a conscientious mother in her way she became. She sold all the furniture she did not require ; and being offered, at a nominal rent, an old farm-house that had long been uninhabited, she established herself therein to the unbounded delight of the children.

The battered old place lay at no great distance from the old home, so there yet remained one or two elderly consolations compatible with her fortune and her weeds. One of these was a bi-annual tea-drinking with the new vicar. Another a seat in church facing a box-shaped tablet with two feet, whereon was chronicled and set forth the many virtues and consequent regrets of the late vicar and his parishioners.

The elder boys were sent away to school. The girls tumbled up rather than were brought up in any strict sense of the word.

Mrs. Newnham, indeed, had the neatest little plans for “keeping up” Nona’s studies, and bringing what little uncertain history and French that yet remained to her to bear on her unthankful progeny. But the human mind is various and the calls of duty manifold ; while Mrs. Newnham was ascertaining that the maid-of-all-work was unimpeachable as regards butter, and the butcher above suspicion in the matter of fore-quarters, the minds of the little Newnhams waxed—as new-made wine-bottles—sound yet empty.

But as Nona grew up her mental vacuum was not such as excludes all knowledge of its ignorance. The conviction of her unlearnedness was on the high-road to mitigating her offence ; she devoured and inwardly digested every scrap of print that came in her way, from Jeremy Taylor to the local newspaper. Before she was

fifteen she almost knew by heart the few books that shabbiness had spared for the moral and mental improvement of the Newnham household.

Nona had in truth obeyed Bacon’s injunction, “read much not many things,” when a most toward event occurred for her.

The old vicar had died, and the new vicar had come to reign in his stead.

Now the new vicar was young and unmarried—propitious circumstances that caused an unwonted flutter in the neighbourhood. In due time he came with his sister to call on Mrs. Newnham.

The lady was affable and rustling, and with the help of a gold eye-glass discovered she was charmed with everything.

“Quite a delightful place, real old-fashioned ; just the place for an artist, so tumbledown—that is, I mean, so picturesque,” she added, perceiving it was of the dubious order of compliment.

The next object of interest turned out to be the unsuspecting Nona.

“My dear child, you ought to be painted. Now the Grosvenor Gallery would take your head, it’s just the style ; it wouldn’t suit the Academy,” said Miss Gibbins, rocking herself to and fro, and half-shutting her eyes. “Beautiful hair, quite the Botticelli tint.”

“They call me ‘carrots’ in the village,” said Nona simply, in wide-eyed wonderment at these fashionable ecstasies.

For it is not yet beautiful in the country to have red hair.

“Never mind, little one ; you must come and see us,” said the vicar, stroking the ruddy mane in question.

So Nona, in due time, went.

By-and-by, seeing her great desire to learn, Mr. Gibbins had offered to teach her German, Euclid, and other accomplishments ; and as Miss Newnham grew apace, and developed a graceful figure, and a tuneful voice, he would fain have taught her that which was not in her mind to give.

PART II.

THE day following the garden escapade being Sunday, Nona robed herself in a clean cotton frock, tied her little poke-bonnet under her chin, and arming herself with her mother’s large Church Service and the charge of three small sisters, set off to the parish church.

The bells had ceased ringing as she entered. In fact, the congregation had already risen, and in the droning voice of Mr. Gibbins the wicked man was turning away from his sin.

Mrs. Newnham could not afford to rent a sitting, but in courtesy the seats in front of the vicarage pew were allotted to the widow lady.

As Nona hurried up the aisle, driving the straggling children with what decorum she might, she perceived among the one or two youths whom the vicar was generally coaching, a strange and withal not ill-favoured man. She had not time to remember if she had ever seen him before, for the children had by this time reasserted their rights. One ingenious one had got her hat hanging off the back of her head, another wanted her place found, while the third was perched on the pinnacle of a high hassock, and had dropped her hymn-book into a neighbouring pew.

After these little difficulties were adjusted there was comparative peace.

The hymn before the sermon was given out, and the congregation were on their feet, when Nona heard a low deferential voice behind her say :

"Allow me——," and a book was placed in her hesitating hand. Where was the hymn? It looked more the shape of a Bible. The leaf was turned down at one corner, and Nona read the words :

"And when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask."

Oh, horror! how her cheeks were burning! It must be that disgusting man who had been looking over the wall the day before. What a rude thing to do—and how foolish it made her feel!

Mr. Gibbins had got to the seventh clause of his sermon before Nona could give anything like respectful attention to the exhortation.

"Oh, how wicked I am," she told herself; and she rearranged her thoughts to listen. But perhaps novelty of treatment was not the most striking point in the vicar's intricate discourses.

"Shall I give it back scornfully; shall I give it back sweetly, innocently, as if I had not seen its intent; or would it be more dignified to pretend to have forgotten it, and not give it back at all?" kept running through her mind.

The Bible still lay open there. . . . "Danced before them, and pleased Herod."

No, she would sweep out of the church, and never look near such an impudent wretch.

The blessing was pronounced, and Nona prayed on her knees in the most fervent

way in the world. Then she stood up. The sun was shining through the windows, the people were moving down the aisle, and exchanging greetings outside the porch.

"I wonder what he's like," was bred of these inspiring surroundings, and Nona, casting all her dignified resolution to the winds, turned her little poke-bonnet, and brought her wondering eyes and parted lips within range of the vicar's pew.

She met the far-away gaze of a handsome but apparently listless and melancholy young man; and the little girl left the church thinking, with Mr. Tulliver, that it's a very puzzling world.

"Who was he, what was he, where did he come from, and what, pray, was he doing?" These and other like enquiries kept dancing through her brain all day.

In the evening the vicar's pew contained only its usual cargo of boys and Miss Cynthia, so that Mr. Gibbins's upliftings gained Nona's ear at last.

"Remember, Nona dear, I expect you to dinner to-morrow," cried Miss Gibbins when, the service concluded, they found themselves outside. "Theophilus would be in despair if you couldn't come. Make yourself lovely, dear."

Of course she remembered. Had it not been her one excitement during the last week, this prospect of dining out? Even to be purged over and adored by Mr. Theophilus was better than darning stockings at home, with the usual economic wailings with which her mother beguiled the evenings when the children were gone to bed. Besides, her white muslin had been washed and ironed, and she had bought three-quarters of a yard of white ribbon for her waist. Then, too, there were rude, melancholy strangers who might be there, and were curious in themselves. Of course Nona would come.

The evening came at last. Nona found an unusual number of guests at the vicarage.

"You look charming, Nona dear," said Miss Gibbins, coming forward. "Where did you get that idea of ivy from—real ivy, too—in your hair; it looks capital!"

She was the most warm-hearted creature with anyone not as well dressed as herself.

"I've given you a charming partner for dinner, Nona," whispered the hostess. Lightly beckoning to a gentleman deep in an armchair, and tête-à-tête with something in black and gold, she murmured: "Mr. Courtney, will you take Miss Newnham in?"

Nona saw the hero of the garden wall and Bible before her, bowing gravely.

She attempted a bow, blushed furiously, while her eyes sought refuge in that retreat for the distressed—the carpet. When she at last found courage to look up, Mr. Courtney was bending over Miss Gibbins—perhaps fastening her bracelet.

"You live in this part of the world?" presently enquired Mr. Courtney, with an air of Miss Dartle asking for information.

They were seated at dinner. The interval between soup and fish elicited this remark:

"Oh, you know I—that is—yes," said Nona, floundering, and more puzzled than ever. She was about to say, "You know I do," but reflected that this would be forward.

"Quiet sort of place. Anything ever happen down here?" asked the laconic gentleman, gazing at Nona with an intentness not suggested in his remarks.

"Happen?" answered the girl, wishing to defend her native place. "Oh, lots of things happen; there's the harvest-home, and the mothers' meetings, and, at Christmas, there's a school-treat, a Christmas-tree, and a dance afterwards here at the Vicarage. But, perhaps" (this a little regretfully; for is not even a laconic and incomprehensible man a godsend in a place where a lank parson and three odd boys represent the sterner sex?), "perhaps you won't be here at Christmas?" and she looked up at him with her pretty, frank, direct gaze.

Something in his look made her drop her eyes shyly for the second time in her life.

"Two days ago I didn't mean to stay long," he replied; "but I think now I shall have to be here at Christmas."

She felt he was still looking in the same strange fashion, a way that the vicar, with his year of amorous philanderings, had not yet compassed.

"You have altered your mind very quickly," said Nona sharply. "I suppose you've weighty reasons."

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Courtney in a far-away tone. "How could I miss the mothers' meetings?"

Nona felt herself aggrieved. She was being made fun of as a country bumpkin, she told herself; so she turned away loftily, and addressed a little remark to her right-hand neighbour.

This was an old gentleman who gobbled in eating, and whose stock piece in the conversational line was an attack of sciatica of ten years back. But even complaints have their limits—by the time Nona had been enlightened as to the

fallacy of treating with morphia instead of galvanism, she became aware that the something in black and gold was on Mr. Courtney's other hand, and that the interrupted tête-à-tête was now flourishing amazingly.

"The dinner will be soon over, all over," thought the little girl. "Oh, if I could only make him look this way."

Then a bright idea occurred to her. Why couldn't she say something clever, to show him she was not to be laughed at. There was a slight pause. Nona peeped round; yes, the enemy was occupied with an ice-cream.

"Do you believe in the Darwin theory?" said the little girl in a casual way, in an air of asking for the salt.

She was successful; he turned round. But pray why did he smile?

"Did the back of my head suggest the question?" asked Mr. Courtney with a fund of merriment in his eyes.

"I don't see anything to laugh at," said Miss Newnham, a little pouting.

"Nor do I," returned the other. "By Jove, it's getting a serious thing. Darwin mixed up with mothers' meetings; it'll never do. I had hoped," he continued mournfully, "but it illustrates the vanity of human wishes, that the higher education was confined to London and the universities. But," said Mr. Courtney, coming as he usually did from the cold abstract to the personal, "I thought that sort of woman wore blue spectacles and bad boots—now a pretty girl like you——"

"Oh, but I like reading; why shouldn't I?" said Nona, interrupting the compliment; "Miss Gibbins has all the lovely books from town, and, oh, it gives a kind of new life, doesn't it, reading all those great thoughts?"

"Well, I'm afraid I don't read them," said the gentleman, thinking what an odd mixture this little girl was, and then an amusing reminiscence seemed to cross his mind.

"But you do care for a few frivolous things—dancing and these things?" he asked, indicating the flowers in front of them in a hesitating sort of way. "At least, I thought you might, as the people seem to down here. Quite a curious custom is kept up, I assure you—evidently a remnant of the old sun-worship. They dance and curtsy to the sun, while they chant a mystic sort of tune, and those big yellow flowers—sun-flowers, do they call them? Well, these flowers, it would appear,

are sacred to the worship. And the high priestess had hair like the rising sun."

"Like the rising sun on the sign-post, you mean," cried Nona excitedly; "it is very very rude of people to look over walls."

Miss Gibbins was nodding to the fattest, most bedecked and bejewelled lady on the premises. Nona rose with the rest.

"You are always laughing at me," said the girl, pouting and looking down.

"On the contrary, I am always admiring you, even when you think it rude."

"Mother," said Nona that night in their dingy little dining-room "dinners are very sensible things; I do hope I shall go to a great many dinners in my life."

"TOM," "BULL," "DOG," AND "JACK."

THE reader may ask in glancing at these words who and what are Tom, Bull, Dog, and Jack, and why they are found together as the title of this paper? I proceed to answer this very obvious question, and gratify his natural curiosity. These monosyllables, as distinguished from the words, representing Thomas, a man's name; Bull, the male of the bovine species; Dog, a hound; and Jack, a familiar name for John; and they occur frequently in colloquial English as adjectives to qualify the substantives which follow them. Tom Noddy, a fool; bulrush, a large reed or rush; dog-rose, a common wild rose without odour; and boot-jack, are familiar examples of the use of these epithets. If we turn for explanation of their meaning to the etymological dictionaries, from that of Dr. Samuel Johnson to those of a later time, to Latham, Stormonth, Webster, and Worcester, who fortunately for philology as a science, do not always follow where their great predecessor leads, we find that they either offer no explanations or guess at erroneous ones. If the Latin and Teutonic sources of the language throw no light upon the subject of the enquiries, they either present an etymology which only exists in their own imagination, or pass the words over as things of no moment, and not worth the trouble of investigation. This is, of course, a safer mode of procedure, or of non-procedure, than if they rashly ventured out of their depths in a vain attempt to explore a language which they either ignore or despise. They look afar off, but they do not look at the ground beneath them and around them. If the origin of a word be un-

usually obscure, they either travel to Arabia, or some further country, to find its root; and, if their research be fruitless, they call it an onomatopoeia! That settles all difficulties, and there they leave it.

Let us return to the first of the four monosyllables that have been cited at the head of this article as texts for a few philological remarks, and investigations which have not hitherto been made by any English lexicographer. And first of all of the prefix tom. Among the many colloquial and familiar words to which it serves as a prefix and qualification are: tom-cat, tom-fool, tom-noddy, tom-boy, tom-tit, tom-poker, tom-pin, tom-toe, tom-o'-Bedlam, tom-rig, tom-tailor, tom-piper, tom-tumbler, tom-sword.

All these are to be found either in the ordinary English dictionaries or in the excellent archaic and provincial glossaries of such industrious and learned antiquaries as Nares, Halliwell, and Wright. Turning to Johnson and his successors it will be found that Tom in Tom-cat is explained as Tom, an abbreviation of the Christian name Thomas, and that consequently Tom-cat is to be accepted as meaning a male or Thomas Cat. Tom-boy, in like manner, if Tom is to be considered an abbreviation of Thomas and equivalent to male, would signify a male boy, which is an absurd and needless repetition. Rig is an old word for a girl, so that according to this interpretation Tom-rig would signify a male girl! In Shadwell's play of the Sullen Lovers, 1670, the word occurs in the following passage: "But in the plays which have been wrote of late there is no such thing as perfect character, but the two chief persons are most commonly a swearing, drinking ruffian for a lover, and an ill-bred, impudent tom-rig for a mistress." Here the word tom is very certainly not an abbreviation of Thomas, but an epithet applied to a woman. If Tom were indeed synonymous with male, Tom-fool would signify male-fool, tom-poker a male poker, tom-pin a male pin, and tom-toe a male toe; explanations that are manifestly untenable. What then is the proper etymology of the syllable Tom in all these instances? It is to be found in the Celtic or Gaelic, the language spoken by the aboriginal possessors of the British islands before Roman, Saxon, or Dane, ever set foot on the soil, or imposed their laws and observances, and a portion of their speech, on the first inhabitants. A language which nearly all English philologists have agreed to ignore, and of

which Johnson, in the intensity of his ignorance of it, spoke with contempt as jargon and gibberish.

The root of this unclassical English word is the Celtic *tom*—a hill, a mound, a heap, a tumulus, and by parity and extension of meaning great, large, big, or anything bulky, great, or big. Hence *tom-toe* is the big toe, *tom-cat* is a big cat, *tom-fool* is a big fool, *tom-foolery* is great foolery, and *tom-poker* is a great poker, *tom-tailor* is a great spider, vulgarly called *daddy long-legs*—tailor being a provincial and once very common word for a spider, the idea being derived apparently from the web or cloth which the intelligent creature spins to aid it in entrapping its food. Thus in none of the words above cited has *tom* any reference to masculinity, but simply to size. Even *tom-tit*, a wren or small bird, is a tit of a larger bulk than the ordinary species, and *tom-noddy* is a larger noddy (or fool) than is commonly met with. *Tom-piper* is the great or principal piper at a fair or other festive gathering, and *tom-tumbler* is the great and principal clown or acrobat of a popular entertainment. *Ton-sword*, which Nares erroneously prints as *ton-sword*, is a large sword. Not knowing or suspecting the real meaning of *tom*, he derives the word from the one-handed or "t'one sword."

In an old and favourite game of cards called "*gleek*," now obsolete, the knave of trumps was called *tom*, because that card was the greatest, and conquered every other.

The next syllable we have to investigate is *bull*, which occurs as a prefix in a variety of English words. Among others *bull-dog*, *bull-rush*, *bull-frog*, *bull's-eyes*, *bull-finch*, *bull-trout*, *bull-beggar*, *bull-fly*, *bull-weed*, *bull-wort*, *bull-speaking*, and in the common vulgarity for an Englishman *John Bull*, and the American phrase of commendation "*Bully for you!*"

Etymologists teach us that *bull* in these examples is derived from "*bull*," a large, fine animal, well known and highly esteemed in all countries, and that *bull-rush* is so called because it is large and fine, as a *bull* is. In this instance the etymologists have stumbled upon half the truth without understanding it or knowing that the word *bull* is applied to the male of the cow—the *taureau* of the French, the *taurus* of the Latin—as an adjective, not a substantive, from the Celtic "*buile*," fine, large, handsome, comely, beautiful. The name *bull* was adopted by the Anglo-Saxons from the Celtic in the infancy of the English

language, because it was descriptive of the appearance of the animal, which in Celtic was called "*tarbh*." The Teutonic "*ochs*" in after-time was enlarged to *bullocks*—half Celtic, half Saxon—fine large oxen. *Bull-dog* is not so named from *taurus* or *tarbh*, but because as a dog it is large and fine. *Bull-frog*, *bull-finch*, *bull-trout*, and *bull-fly* receive their names from the same idea of large and fine, and not because there is or can be any similarity even in fancy between a frog, a bird, a fish, and an insect, and the mate of a bovine female. *Bull-beggar* is a term of opprobrium applied to a mendicant because he is hale, strong, and well made, and ought to be ashamed, being wellable to work, to prefer beggary to labour.

The phrase "*bull-speaking*," according to Nares, signifies boastful language. In Boone's Northern Lasse occurs the passage: "Why what a bullfinch this is! Sure 'tis his language they call *bull-speaking*." That is to say, very loud, fine talk.

"*Bull's-eyes*," the name of a sweetmeat which is a great favourite with children, is not derived from the animal *bull* or from its eyes, but is a corruption of the Celtic "*buile-suig*," which with the elision of the guttural, of which the English language is intolerant, and which Englishmen find so difficult to pronounce and always avoid if they can, becomes "*builsui*," fine or beautiful to suck. In America a violoncello is called sometimes a *tom-fiddle*, and sometimes a *bull-fiddle*; *bull-nut* is a large hickory nut; *bull-briar* is a large wild briar; and *bull-horse* is a fine large horse.

"*Bully for you*," the expressive American phrase of congratulation or commendation to a person who has been fortunate, or who has succeeded in a great achievement, is from the same source: "*Buile*" or "*Bully for you*" (i.e., fine for you).

"*John Bull*," as suggested by a correspondent to the author of the *Gaelic Etymology of the English and Lowland Scotch*, and the languages of Western Europe, is merely another term for *John Buile*, the French, *beau* or *bel*: *John* the handsome, the strong, the well-built. In this sense the word would be a compliment to the manly character of the Englishman; whereas, if the comparison be to the ox or bull, the phrase would be the reverse of respectful.

Our next word is *dog*, which, as a prefix, or adjective, is clearly traceable to the Celtic. When the word *dog* first crept into English, and replaced the Anglo-Saxon *hound*—the "*hund*" of the German—is not easy to determine. It appears,

however, to be of comparatively modern origin, and finds no place in very early English. Dog and dogged appear in Mr. Herbert Coleridge's Dictionary of the Oldest Words in the English Language, dating from the semi-Saxon period from A.D. 1250 to 1300. Dog, on its first introduction into the English tongue at whatever period that may have been, and which there is now no possibility of tracing, appears to have been always used as a word of contempt, hatred, or opprobrium. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" "An ugly dog." "An ungrateful dog." "A dogged disposition." All these phrases express or imply disapprobation of the animal or person so designated. The word thus employed was in all probability first applied to curs, tykes, mongrels, and animals of low degree, and not to valuable thoroughbreds that were highly esteemed, either for their beauty or their utility. It had its origin in the Celtic "dogh," abbreviated from *do-agartaich*, quarrelsome and surly; *docair* or *dogair*, sullen, intractable, ill-natured, coarse, disagreeable; *doganta*, wild, vulgar, rough; *doghra* (Irish Gaelic), dull, stupid, coarse, common. Bearing these Celtic words in mind, we come to the conclusion that the prefix dog has no connexion with the name of the noble and affectionate animal, who, if he could boast otherwise than by a wag of his honest tail, might affirm that he was not alone the friend, but the favourite of man, and deserved to be so for his many estimable moral qualities.

The following words, some of them archaic and provincial, but most of them in familiar use, are compounded of this prefix and a noun: Dog-rose, dog-daisy, dog-violet, dog-wood, dog-fennell, dog-bee, dog-fish, dog-lichen, dog-hook, dog-cabbage, dog-wheat, dog-grass, dog-trick, dog-Latin, doggerel.

If instead of "dog," the adjectives rough, rude, common, coarse, inferior, and others wholly or nearly synonymous, be prefixed to the noun or quality indicated by the word, it will be found that the sense will be truly rendered. If this be so, the English language must have adopted the word from the Celtic, and could not have borrowed so inappropriate a word, as dog in the Anglo-Saxon sense would be if synonymous with hound. A dog-bee, for instance, is a drone—a coarse, common, inferior bee that makes no honey. A dog-fish is a fish unfit for culinary purposes on account of its coarseness. A dog-cabbage

is a cabbage only in appearance, and not edible. Dog-wheat is a coarse, wheat-like grass that yields no available grain. A dog-trick is a common, obvious, coarse trick easily seen through. Dog-Latin is coarse, rough, irregular Latin intermixed with barbarous and unpermissible foreign words such as are not to be found in Horace, Virgil, Lucretius, Cæsar, Cicero, Ovid, and Tacitus, and other recognised Latin authors. Doggerel, in like manner, is verse, having nothing of poetry about it but the form of rhythm and rhyme—base, barbarous, coarse, irregular, "detested of gods and men."

The last of our four words, "Jack," would at first sight appear to be a familiar abbreviation of John, and to be applied in that sense. It occurs in jack-tar, roasting-jack, boot-jack, jack-of-all-trades, jack-boots, jackey (gin); jack, part of the machinery of a lock and of a pianoforte; jack, an engine for raising heavy weights; jack-knife, jack-towel, black-jack.

In some instances where the word occurs, such as jackass, jackdaw, jack-an-apes, jack-a-lent, jack-pudding, it is manifestly derived from Jack, the familiar name for John; but in the examples above cited the true etymology is to be found in the Celtic or Gaelic *deagh* (d before the vowels e and i is pronounced j). *Deagh* (or *jeagh*), the Kymric *da*, signifies good, fit, appropriate, excellent, well. A jack-tar is a good sailor, a roasting-jack is an instrument fit, appropriate, or good for the purpose of roasting. A jack-of-all-trades is one fit to turn his hand to anything useful; a jack-knife is a good, useful, and large knife; a boot-jack is good to pull off boots. Jackey, a slang word for English gin, means also strong ale, and among children a species of sweatmeat, and is in all these cases synonymous with something good; as the French call a sweatmeat a *bon-bon*, or as the Scotch call them goodies. Black-jack is an old name for a large bottle of black leather, good to hold beer and other liquors. Beaumont and Fletcher have preserved the words: "There is a Dead Sea of drink in the cellar in which goodly vessels lie wrecked, and in the middle of this deluge appear the tops of flagons and black-jacks, like churches drowned in the marshes."

Jack is a name applied to the little hammers that struck the strings, obedient to the touch, on the virginals and harpsichords that preceded the pianoforte, and is applied to the similar instruments in the pianoforte itself. Shakespeare, in the one

hundred and twenty-eighth sonnet of the series attributed to him, says of his love playing on the virginal that he envies

Those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
While my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.

Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers—me thy lips to kiss.

Jack is a word that was applied to the figures that struck the hours upon church clocks in towers and steeples, such as that which many persons yet living may remember to have seen on old St. Dunstan's, near Temple Bar, a counterfeit resemblance of which still ornaments the front of a well-known watchmaker's shop in Cheapside. The word, thus employed, no more represents the familiar name of Jack for John than the jacks of the virginals. It may be remarked before we conclude that Jack, as the familiar name for John, appears to be founded on a mistake, and that it originally signified James, and not John, from the French Jacques. If in any of the instances above cited James, the English for Jacques, was substituted, such compounds as boot-james for boot-jack, roasting-james for roasting-jack, or james-towel for jack-towel, would be so ridiculous as to arrest the attention of the most careless English philologists, and compel them to seek elsewhere than in John and Jack for the origin of a word that, like all others, had a sensible meaning when first used, though its true sense, owing to the very composite character of the English language, has been lost in the lapse of ages.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXIII. THE STATUE IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

"I RE-OPEN my diary. I am in a land of wonders.

"Two years have elapsed since my conversation with Margaret Sylvester, when I believed I had completed the chain which surrounds the lives of Evangeline, Margaret, Clarice, and Harold. But much was hidden from me which I had no expectation would ever be disclosed. I was in absolute ignorance of the circumstances and condition of the sisters whom Harold's treachery had torn from each other's arms. I had then no intention of continuing this record; but events have occurred, and a discovery I have made (which shall in its

proper place be set down) is in its nature and possibilities so startling, that I shall find relief in imparting my secrets to a companion to whom I can talk, and in whom I can confide with unreserved confidence. These white pages will not betray me.

"The friendship sealed between Joseph Sylvester and myself has endured, and appears likely to endure. He is growing into manhood, and those qualities in him for which I gave him credit as a lad—such as faithfulness and determination of purpose—have developed in strength; they are part of his nature. He is not too free with his tongue—a decided merit. Loquacity is ever dangerous. I have tested Joseph Sylvester, have given him tasks to perform, have walked in the woods with him, and have studied his character, aware the while that he was studying mine in his quiet way. He is not a blind follower; he has opinions of his own. There is but one person whom he would blindly obey—Evangeline. His will is subordinate to her lightest whim. It would be a cruel test were she, in a moment of waywardness, to call upon him for a foolhardy proof of love; he would give it without remonstrance. He is weak only where Evangeline is concerned; it will be well for both if she uses her power with tenderness and wisdom.

"My white doves fly now between valley and mountain. Evangeline calls them her white angels. The idea was mine, and the children entered into it with delight. A pigeon-house was built on the roof of Margaret Sylvester's dwelling, and Joseph and I had no difficulty in training the pigeons to fly to and fro. Thus the children and I are in constant communication, and many a weary hour has been beguiled by watching the pretty messengers conveying messages of love under their wings to those who are dear to me. Threads of love between valley and mountain, invisible air-lines stretching from heart to heart.

"From the top of my mountain I can see far over the sea, and my message sometimes runs, 'A ship is making for the Silver Isle.' The news is conveyed to the inhabitants of the isle, and in this way I am enabled to render them a small service. It occurs to me occasionally that I owe them that which I can never repay. This Silver Isle is theirs, and they have allowed me to live here in peace. That the service is rendered in the name of Mauvain does

not lessen the obligation. True, they did not receive me with open arms, but I had no right to expect it. In no other part of the world could I have lived my life free and untrammelled, at liberty to come and go, and surrounded by peace and plenty. I thank them for it from my heart. Churl that I am, it would be difficult for me to express my thanks in spoken words. I lack the generous impulse; my nature has been warped.

"The children call me, 'the Master of the Mountain.' A little while after my pigeons had been taught their duty I received the following message, in Joseph Sylvester's handwriting:

"'Evangeline's love, and Gabrielle's, and Joseph's, to Ranf, their friend. Grandfather Matthew wishes to see the Master of the Mountain. He will be at its foot an hour before sunrise to-morrow.'

"At the hour named I was at the appointed place, and found Matthew Sylvester awaiting me.

"He and his grandson bear a close resemblance to each other. If Joseph's good qualities are inherited from his grandfather, then is Matthew Sylvester a man to be trusted. Sincerity and honesty of purpose are depicted in his face; it is not a mask to hide the secret thought. He and his son Paul are cunning fishermen. They have a boat for deep-sea fishing, and I often watch it from the heights when it is far out at sea.

"Matthew Sylvester came straight to the point.

"'I wish to speak with you,' he said, 'about my daughter Margaret, and her sister Clarice.'

"'At Margaret Sylvester's desire?' I asked.

"'No,' he replied; 'of my own prompting.'

"'I am ready to listen,' I said.

"'And to deal frankly with me?'

"'In what way?'

"'In open speech.'

"'That is as it may be,' I said. 'A man must judge for himself how far it is prudent to speak openly.'

"'There is no danger with me,' he rejoined. 'In what passes between us now we shall be travelling the same road—the road which leads to the happiness and peace of mind of those we love.'

"'Admitting as much,' I said, guardedly, 'even that we have the same goal in view, it may happen that we have cross purposes to serve. Then, discovering that our interests are conflicting, we should not be slow

to take advantage of words uttered in such a conversation as this. Remember, it is not of my seeking.'

"'True,' he said, with a smile of much sweetness; 'but is it necessary always to dive beneath the surface in search of suspicious motives?'

"'A man must be guided by his experiences; I am guided by mine.'

"'You have no reason to mistrust me?'

"'No more reason than I have to trust you.'

"I was aware that, in adopting this tone, I was not meeting Matthew Sylvester in the spirit with which he approached me; but Evangeline was concerned in all that concerned Margaret and Clarice, and, although it placed me in an ungenerous light in the mind of such a man as he who stood before me, I preferred to err rather on the side of caution than of frankness. His next words put me to shame.

"'I am unreasonable,' he said gently; 'it was not to be expected that you should open your heart to a stranger simply for the asking. Even if I held out the hand of friendship to you, I could not expect you to accept it without questioning my motive. The fault is on my side; if I desired your friendship I should have sought it earlier. I come to you now on behalf of my daughter Margaret, who is very dear to me, and I shall be plain and truthful with you, concealing nothing. I take it that you and I stand upon equal ground; we have seen the world and served our time, and care but little for ourselves. We have found our species forgetful of favours, ready to vilify, eager to condemn. It is said that old age is selfish; naturally; but it is not as selfish as youth. The young are forgetful; the old remember. Entranced by the light and fresh beauty of life, the young think only of themselves, of their own joys and sorrows and ambitions. They live to learn, as we have lived to learn; in the meantime let us who have fought and been wounded in the fight, endeavour to protect our young from unnecessary sorrow.'

"There was a singular fascination in Matthew Sylvester's manner, and I could not help being won by it. I inwardly resolved to meet him in a franker spirit; but neither to him nor any man on the isle would I disclose the heart of my secret respecting Evangeline. He continued:

"'Those are happiest to whom knowledge comes late; they have more time to enjoy. But some taste the bitterness of

life in their springtime. My daughter Margaret was one of these. When life should have been fairest for her it was darkened by a sorrow which exists at this hour, although many years have passed since it was inflicted. This sorrow is associated with her sister Clarice, whose name you only of all the inhabitants of this isle have uttered in her hearing. She has dwelt upon the circumstance with the tenacity of a very tenacious and constant nature, and she believes you had a reason for speaking to her about her sister.

"'I had a reason,' I replied. 'It was partly to confirm a suspicion that was in my mind.'

"'Partly,' repeated Matthew Sylvester, with a quickness which showed how deeply he himself was interested; 'then it was not wholly your purpose?'

"'No, it was not wholly my purpose.'

"'A woman who is in the habit of brooding over a subject in which her affections are involved has strange fancies. You have been in our market-place, and seen the statue there.'

"'Yes.'

"'It is the statue of that Evangeline whose tragic death occurred on the mountain upon which you dwell. Margaret, when she first beheld the statue fancied it resembled her sister Clarice. But that, of course, was impossible.'

"'I repeated his words mechanically, 'That, of course, was impossible : ' but my thoughts belied them.

"'Is the name of the sculptor known ?' I asked.

"'No,' replied Matthew Sylvester, 'and the story goes that when, at the instance of the captain of a brig which traded to this isle, the commission was given, the likeness of one of our fairest maids was handed to him as a model for the sculptor to work upon; and that, when the statue was delivered and set up in the market-place it was seen that the sculptor had worked from a model of his own.'

"'The story is new to me,' I said; 'I cannot see the connection between the statue and Clarice.'

"'Does it, to your mind, bear any resemblance to Margaret's sister?'

"'I saw her but once, and I have paid no particular attention to the statue.'

"'You have led a life of adventure, I understand. You must have some sympathy with the life led by Margaret and Clarice—led, also, by myself and my son. Ah, I sometimes think of the old days with a

strange yearning, hard as they were! When you met Clarice, Margaret was with her.'

"'No; Clarice was alone. I admit that I was not truthful when I told Margaret Sylvester that I had seen her in the company of her sister. Moreover, I do not know even now what kind of life the sisters led.'

"'They were dancers, singers, performers in small comedies, wandering from village to village, playing to humble folk who gave them honest welcome. While their father lived their life was a happy one, but when he died—Matthew Sylvester made a sudden pause, and with a quick changing of his theme asked, 'if Margaret was not with her sister when you met her, and you were not acquainted with their occupation, how did you know the girl you saw was Clarice?'

"'The question almost took me off my guard, and I answered slowly, 'From evidence not to be doubted.'

"'Matthew Sylvester looked at me wistfully. 'I must not press you too hardly; I have no right to demand a clearer explanation. You are aware that Clarice is dead.'

"'I started, and the movement did not escape his notice.

"'When did you learn this?' I asked. 'Lately?'

"'No—many years ago.'

"'Since you have been on the Silver Isle?'

"'No,' he said, 'I learnt it in the old land, before Margaret and my son were married.'

"'These words opened a new chapter in the mystery which enveloped the life of Clarice. It was but a short time before I, with Evangeline and Harold, set sail for the Silver Isle that I had given shelter to Clarice in my mother's hut and was witness of her grief. I was now as anxious to hear what it was in Matthew Sylvester's power to impart to me as he was to hear what I could impart to him, and at my request he related to me the story of the lives of Margaret and Clarice. It deeply moved me. He told me of the love existing between the sisters, of the passionate devotion of Margaret for Clarice, of their happy days while their father lived, of his dying and leaving them in the power of a man who used them cruelly, of Margaret's protection of Clarice, of the last night the sisters saw each other, and the strange impressions left upon Margaret's mind when she and Clarice fell asleep in the room in which their master was gambling with

two gentlemen (in one of whom I saw Harold as plainly as though he stood at my side), of Margaret's terror in the morning when she awoke and found her sister gone, of the pursuit of Clarice and its failure, of Margaret's agony when the news flashed upon her that she and Clarice had been betrayed, of her keeping with her master, enduring misery and want, and travelling with him in the hope that one day she would find her sister, of the gradual fading of her hope, of the meeting in the woods of Margaret and Matthew Sylvester, of her release from tyranny and suffering, of the news of Clarice's death furnished for a consideration by the man who had torn the sisters from each other's arms, and lastly of the marriage of Margaret and Matthew's son, and their departure for the Silver Isle.

"This story, related in simple language by Matthew Sylvester, made everything clear to me; nothing was wanting to complete the villainy of the plot. Clarice had been deliberately sold and deliberately bought, and the sisters had been taken opposite roads on false promises, and separated from each other so effectually that nothing short of a miracle could have brought them together again. My respect for Margaret was strengthened, as was my detestation for Harold, the gentleman who lived for the pleasure of the hour; and I vowed inwardly that if the opportunity ever offered itself, I would avenge the wrongs of the sisters without mercy or pity.

"In return for the confidence Matthew Sylvester had reposed in me I imparted to him something of my own life in the forest owned by Mauvain, of the storm, and the appeal for shelter by a lady and her servant, and of my learning the following day that the lady's name was Clarice. I recalled the conversation that took place between the servant and myself—a conversation which, if words had meaning, defined in unmistakable terms Clarice's social position. I said nothing of Evangeline, nor of Clarice's lament for the child she had lost.

"Describe the lady to me," said Matthew.

"I did so, faithfully, and his remarks left no doubt upon my mind (but truly there was room for none, all the parts of the story fitting so exactly) that the lady was indeed Clarice, Margaret's unfortunate sister.

"One point still remains," said Matthew; "the date of the meeting between you and this lady."

"I fixed the date by my arrival on the

Silver Isle, and Matthew Sylvester's face became indescribably sad.

"We were deceived," he said; "Clarice lived—perhaps lives—a life of shame." He paused before he spoke again. "Thus do we lose our faith in goodness! Were Margaret's faith in her sister's purity to be shaken, I can imagine no grief more terrible than hers would be. The very name of Clarice is to her an emblem of purity."

"Then arose within me, in vindication of the unfortunate girl, the true history of her betrayal, known only to me and her and Harold, as related in her confession in the Bible, and I felt that it would be a stain upon my manhood if I did not speak in her behalf.

"Listen," I said, "and do not question me as to the means by which I obtained my knowledge. Clarice is innocent. What is pure is pure; no laws formed by man, from motives of policy or convenience, can affect the immutable. There are principles of right and wrong which results cannot twist or modify by the breadth of a hair. In the eyes of Heaven (a convenient phrase to express my meaning) Clarice, when I met her, was a pure woman. That what is clear in supreme judgment is not clear in man's matters little to me, and should matter little to any human being whose mind is not the slave of convenient custom. When cunning and innocence meet, and innocence is betrayed, I know at which door lies the guilt, and, if there be a higher than earthly justice, which will be adjudged the sinner and which the saint."

"How shall we convey comfort to Marguerite," said Matthew, "when she learns the story of her sister's shame?"

"Let her never learn it," I replied. "Let her rest in the belief that Clarice is dead. It is best so. Do not convey a new unhappiness to one who has already had more than her share of suffering."

"So it was agreed between us, and we parted.

"Within a week of this interview I walked at midnight into the great marketplace of the isle, and waited for the moon to rise. Not a sound disturbed the stillness; the land was in darkness; the islanders were at rest. It was as though a dead world lay in the arms of an eternal night.

"I stood before the statue of Evangeline unable, in the deep gloom which prevailed, to discern the features or the moulding of the limbs. I fancied I saw a figure move in the darkness; I advanced towards it,

and it glided away. I believed it to be a creation of the dark clouds which moved slowly across the sky.

"Again and again was I deceived, and I determined not to yield to the mental jugglery. In due time the moon arose, and the white statue of Evangeline stood out in the clear light, a work of transcendent beauty. The raised hand, in the act of listening, the inclined head, the smile on its lips, were life-like. Different as was the aspect under which I had seen Clarice in my mother's hut—in the life expressive of despair, in the stone expressive of gladness—I recognised the likeness. It was Clarice. Harold had done his work well. A great artist—and a villain!"

"Yet in admiration I gazed upon the perfect work, representing a maid who two centuries ago had been led to death by love's betrayal. Had any other than Harold been the sculptor, I could have kissed the naked feet and worshipped the hand that shaped them.

"Suddenly I heard a voice.

"She lives!"

"Who spoke? Spirit or mortal?"

"Mortal—and she stood by my side, a woman, with a weird smile on a face that once was beautiful, that was beautiful now, even in its ghastliness, with the pallid light of the moon shining on it.

"She was fantastically dressed in patches of colour; flowers were in her hair; her eyes were blue and wandering; her hands were never still.

"Had a spirit appeared to me I should have been less surprised.

"She lives!" repeated the woman. "I did not think any knew it but I, but you are in the secret. Are you a man? You don't look like it. When the people are about she is dead; when they sleep she lives. See—we are alike."

"She put out a white and bleeding foot, and seeing blood-marks on the earth, stooped and wiped them up with her

dress. It may be that I gave her a pitying look, for she said, still smiling:

"It does not hurt. There are worse pains. My baby is dead. I will show you her grave.

"Her hand grasped mine, and without force I could not have released it.

"Good-night," she said to the statue; "I will come again."

"Unresistingly I allowed her to lead me the way she wished to go, and on the road she talked to the trees, and the fields, and the clouds, which were now gathering and obscuring the light. We walked for fully a mile, and when it was quite dark, she said:

"Tell me. Is it a sin to love?"

"No." I had no other answer to give.

"You are not a man," she retorted, "for you do not answer as others do. It is a sin to love, and I have loved and sinned. So they say. If my baby had lived I should not have cared; I should have laughed in their faces. Hush! I hear her crying!"

"The wind was wailing. A storm was rising.

"Come quickly. She is crying because I have been away from her so long!"

"I had no heart to gainsay her, and she led me into a desolate valley, some distance from the houses of the islanders, and stopped before a little mound of earth covered with wild flowers.

"They would not bury her with the others," she said, kneeling by the grave. "I was glad. I have her all to myself. Hush, darling! Mother is with you!"

"She took no further notice of me, and I, not knowing what else to do, left her by her baby's grave, which she kissed and talked to as if it was her baby's face.

"So. Even in this peaceful isle sin and shame and love, and love's betrayal, find their way into human life. Thus will it ever be in lands where mortals live and die."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXVIII. BROOK STREET.

SILVERBRIDGE had now a week on his hands which he felt he might devote to the lady of his love. It was a comfort to him that he need have nothing to do with the address. To have had to go, day after day, to the Treasury in order that he might learn his lesson, would have been disagreeable to him. He did not quite know how the lesson would have been communicated, but fancied it would have come from "Old Roby," whom he did not love much better than Sir Timothy. Then the speech must have been composed, and afterwards submitted to someone—probably to old Roby again, by whom no doubt it would be cut and slashed, and made quite a different speech than he had intended. If he had not praised Sir Timothy himself, Roby—or whatever other tutor might have been assigned to him—would have put the praise in. And then how many hours it would have taken to learn "the horrid thing" by heart. He proudly felt that he had not been prompted by idleness to decline the task; but not the less was he glad to have shuffled the burden from off his shoulders.

Early the next morning he was in Brook Street, having sent a note to say he would call, and having even named the hour. And yet when he knocked at the door, he was told with the utmost indifference by a London footman, that Miss Boncassen was not at home—also that Mrs. Boncassen was not at home—also that Mr. Boncassen was not at home. When he asked at what hour Miss Boncassen was expected home,

the man answered him, just as though he had been anybody else, that he knew nothing about it. He turned away in disgust, and had himself driven to the Beargarden. In his misery he had recourse to game-pie and a pint of champagne for his lunch. "Halloa, old fellow, what is this I hear about you?" said Nidderdale, coming in and sitting opposite to him.

"I don't know what you have heard."

"You are going to second the address. What made them pick you out from the lot of us?"

"It is just what I am not going to do."

"I saw it all in the papers."

"I daresay—and yet it isn't true. I shouldn't wonder if they ask you." At this moment a waiter handed a large official letter to Lord Nidderdale, saying that the messenger who had brought it was waiting for an answer in the hall. The letter bore the important signature of T. Beeswax on the corner of the envelope, and so disturbed Lord Nidderdale that he called at once for a glass of soda-and-brandy. When opened it was found to be very nearly a counterpart of that which Silverbridge had received down in the country. There was, however, added a little prayer that Lord Nidderdale would at once come down to the Treasury Chambers.

"They must be very hard up," said Lord Nidderdale. "But I shall do it. Cantrip is always at me to do something, and you see if I don't butter them up properly." Then having fortified himself with game-pie and a glass of brown sherry he went away at once to the Treasury Chambers.

Silverbridge felt himself a little better after his lunch—better still when he had

smoked a couple of cigarettes walking about the empty smoking-room. And as he walked he collected his thoughts. She could hardly have meant to slight him. No doubt her letter down to him at Harrington had been very cold. No doubt he had been ill-treated in being sent away so unceremoniously from the door. But yet she could hardly intend that everything between them should be over. Even an American girl could not be so unreasonable as that. He remembered the passionate way in which she had assured him of her love. All that could not have been forgotten! He had done nothing by which he could have forfeited her esteem. She had desired him to tell the whole affair to her father, and he had done so. Mr. Boncassen might perhaps have objected. It might be that this American was so prejudiced against English aristocrats as to desire no commerce with them. There were not many Englishmen who would not have welcomed him as a son-in-law, but Americans might be different. Still — still Isabel would hardly have shown her obedience to her father in this way. She was too independent to obey her father in a matter concerning her own heart. And if he had not been the possessor of her heart at that last interview, then she must have been false indeed! So he got once more into his hansom, and had himself taken back to Brook Street.

Mrs. Boncassen was in the drawing-room alone. "I am so sorry," said the lady, "but Mr. Boncassen has, I think, just gone out."

"Indeed! and where is Isabel?"

"Isabel is downstairs—that is, if she hasn't gone out too. She did talk of going with her father to the Museum. She is getting quite bookish. She has got a ticket, and goes there, and has all the things brought to her just like the other learned folks."

"I am anxious to see her, Mrs. Boncassen."

"My! If she has gone out it will be a pity. She was only saying yesterday she wouldn't wonder if you shouldn't turn up."

"Of course I've turned up, Mrs. Boncassen. I was here an hour ago."

"Was it you who called and asked all them questions? My! We couldn't make out who it was. The man said it was a hurried young gentleman who wouldn't leave a card—but who wanted to see Mr. Boncassen most especial."

"It was Isabel I wanted to see. Didn't

I leave a card? No; I don't think I did. I felt so—almost at home, that I didn't think of a card."

"That's very kind of you, Lord Silverbridge."

"I hope you are going to be my friend, Mrs. Boncassen."

"I am sure I don't know, Lord Silverbridge. Isabel is most used to having her own way I guess. I think when hearts are joined almost nothing ought to stand between them. But Mr. Boncassen does have doubts. He don't wish as Isabel should force herself anywhere. But here she is, and now she can speak for herself." Whereupon not only did Isabel enter the room, but at the same time Mrs. Boncassen most discreetly left it. It must be confessed that American mothers are not afraid of their daughters.

Silverbridge, when the door was closed, stood looking at the girl for a moment and thought that she was more lovely than ever. She was dressed for walking. She still had on her fur jacket, but had taken off her hat. "I was in the parlour downstairs," she said, "when you came in, with papa; and we were going out together; but when I heard who was here, I made him go alone. Was I not good?"

He had not thought of a word to say, or a thing to do—but he felt as he looked at her that the only thing in the world worth living for, was to have her for his own. For a moment he was half abashed. Then in the next she was close in his arms with his lips pressed to hers. He had been so sudden that she had been unable, at any rate thought that she had been unable, to repress him. "Lord Silverbridge," she said, "I told you I would not have it. You have offended me."

"Isabel!"

"Yes; Isabel! Isabel is offended with you. Why did you do it?"

"Why did he do it? It seemed to him to be the most unnecessary question. 'I want you to know how I love you.'"

"Will that tell me? That only tells me how little you think of me."

"Then it tells you a falsehood—for I am thinking of you always. And I always think of you as being the best and dearest and sweetest thing in the world. And now I think you dearer and sweeter than ever." Upon this she tried to frown; but her frown at once broke out into a smile. "When I wrote to say that I was coming, why did you not stay at home for me this morning?"

"I got no letter, Lord Silverbridge."

"Why didn't you get it?"

"That I cannot say, Lord Silverbridge."

"Isabel, if you are so formal, you will kill me."

"Lord Silverbridge, if you are so forward, you will offend me." Then it turned out that no letter from him had reached the house; and as the letter had been addressed to Bruton Street, instead of Brook Street, the failure on the part of the post-office was not surprising.

Whether or no she were offended, or he killed, he remained with her the whole of that afternoon. "Of course I love you," she said. "Do you suppose I should be here with you if I did not, or that you could have remained in the house after what you did just now? I am not given to run into rhapsodies quite so much as you are—and being a woman perhaps it is as well that I am not. But I think I can be quite as true to you as you are to me."

"I am so much obliged to you for that," he said, grasping at her hand.

"But I am sure that rhapsodies won't do any good. Now I'll tell you my mind."

"You know mine," said Silverbridge.

"I will take it for granted that I do. Your mind is to marry me will ye nill ye, as the people say." He answered this by merely nodding his head and getting a little nearer to her. "That is all very well in its way, and I am not going to say but what I am gratified." Then he did grasp her hand. "If it pleases you to hear me say so, Lord Silverbridge——"

"Not Lord!"

"Then I shall call you Plantagenet—only it sounds so horribly historical. Why are you not Thomas or Abraham? But if it will please you to hear me say so, I am ready to acknowledge that nothing in all my life ever came near to the delight I have in your love." Hereupon he almost succeeded in getting his arm round her waist. But she was strong and seized his hand and held it. "And I speak no rhapsodies. I tell you a truth which I want you to know and to keep in your heart—so that you may be always, always sure of it."

"I never will doubt it."

"But that marrying will ye nill ye, will not suit me. There is so much wanted for happiness in life."

"I will do all that I can."

"Yes. Even though it be hazardous, I am willing to trust you. If you were as other

men are, if you could do as you please as lower men may do, I would leave father and mother and my own country—that I might be your wife. I would do that because I love you. But what will my life be here, if they who are your friends turn their backs upon me? What will your life be, if, through all that, you continue to love me?"

"That will all come right."

"And what will your life be, or mine," she said, going on with her own thoughts without seeming to have heard his last words, "if in such a condition as that you did not continue to love me?"

"I should always love you."

"It might be very hard—and if once felt to be hard, then impossible. You have not looked at it as I have done. Why should you? Even with a wife that was a trouble to you——"

"Oh, Isabel!"

His arm was now round her waist, but she continued speaking as though she were not aware of the embrace. "Yes, a trouble! I shall not be always just what I am now. Now I can be bright and pretty, and hold my own with others because I am so. But are you sure—I am not—that I am such stuff as an English lady should be made of? If in ten years' time you found that others did not think so—that, worse again, you did not think so yourself, would you be true to me then?"

"I will always be true to you."

She gently extricated herself, as though she had done so that she might better turn round and look into his face. "Oh, my own one, who can say of himself that it would be so? How could it be so, when you have all the world against you? You would still be what you are—with a clog round your leg while at home. In Parliament, among your friends, at your clubs, you would be just what you are. You would be that Lord Silverbridge who had all good things at his disposal—except that he had been unfortunate in his marriage! But what should I be?" Though she paused he could not answer her—not yet. There was a solemnity in her speech which made it necessary that he should hear her to the end. "I, too, have my friends in my own country. It is no disgrace to me there that my grandfather worked on the quays. No one holds her head higher than I do, or is more sure of being able to hold it. I have there that assurance of esteem and honour which you have here. I would lose it all to do you a

good. But I will not lose it to do you an injury."

"I don't know about injuries," he said, getting up and walking about the room. "But I am sure of this. You will have to be my wife."

"If your father will take me by the hand and say that I shall be his daughter, I will risk all the rest. Even then it might not be wise; but we love each other too well not to run some peril. Do you think that I want anything better than to preside in your home, to soften your cares, to welcome your joys, to be the mother perhaps of your children, and to know that you are proud that I should be so? No, my darling. I can see a Paradise—only, only, I may not be fit to enter it. I must use some judgment better than my own—sounder, dear, than yours. Tell the duke what I say—tell him with what language a son may use to his father. And remember that all you ask for yourself you will ask doubly for me."

"I will ask him so that he cannot refuse me."

"If you do I shall be contented. And now go. I have said ever so much, and I am tired."

"Isabel? Oh, my love."

"Yes; Isabel—your love! I am that at any rate for the present—and proud to be so as a queen. Well, if it must be, this once, as I have been so hard to you." Then she gave him her cheek to kiss, but of course he took more than she gave.

When he got out into the street it was dark, and there was still standing the faithful cab. But he felt that at the present moment it would be impossible to sit still, and he dismissed the equipage. He walked rapidly along Brook Street into Park Lane, and from thence to the park, hardly knowing whither he went in the enthusiasm of the moment. He walked back to the Marble Arch, and thence round by the drive to the Guard House and the bridge over the Serpentine, by the Knightsbridge Barracks to Hyde Park Corner. Though he should give up everything and go and live in her own country with her, he would marry her. His politics, his hunting, this address to the Queen, his horses, his guns, his father's wealth, and his own rank—what were they all to Isabel Boncassen? In meeting her he had met the one human being in all the world who could really be anything to him either in friendship or in love. When she had told him what she would do for him to make his home happy, it had seemed to

him that all other delights must fade away from him for ever. How odious were Tifto and his racehorses, how unmeaning the noise of his club, how terrible the tedium of those parliamentary benches! He could not tell his love as she had told hers. He acknowledged to himself that his words could not be as her words—nor his intellect as hers. But his heart could be as true. She had spoken to him of his name, his rank, and all his outside world around him. He would make her understand at last that they were nothing to him in comparison with her. When he had got round to Hyde Park Corner, he felt that he was almost compelled to go back again to Brook Street. In no other place could there be anything to interest him—nowhere else could there be light, or warmth, or joy! But what would she think of him? To go back hot, and soiled with mud, in order that he might say one more adieu—that possibly he might ravish one more kiss—would hardly be manly. He must postpone all that for the morrow. On the morrow of course he would be there.

But his work was all before him! That prayer had to be made to his father; or rather some wonderful effort of eloquence must be made by which his father might be convinced that this girl was so infinitely superior to anything of feminine creation that had ever hitherto been seen or heard of, that all ideas as to birth, country, rank, or name ought in this instance to count for nothing. He did believe himself that he had found such a pearl, that no question of setting need be taken into consideration. If the duke would not see it, the fault would be in the duke's eyes, or perhaps in his own words—but certainly not in the pearl.

Then he compared her to poor Lady Mabel, and in doing so did arrive at something near the truth in his inward delineation of the two characters. Lady Mabel with all her grace, with all her beauty, with all her talent, was a creature of efforts—or, as it might be called, a manufactured article. She strove to be graceful, to be lovely, to be agreeable and clever. Isabel was all this and infinitely more without any struggle. When he was most fond of Mabel, most anxious to make her his wife, there had always been present to him a feeling that she was old. Though he knew her age to a day—and knew her to be younger than himself, yet she was old. Something had gone of her native bloom,

something had been scratched and chipped from the first fair surface, and this had been repaired by varnish and veneering. Though he had loved her he had never been altogether satisfied with her. But Isabel was as young as Hebe. He knew nothing of her actual years, but he did know that to have seemed younger, or to have seemed older—to have seemed in any way different from what she was—would have been to be less perfect.

CHAPTER LXIX. PERT POPPET!

ON a Sunday morning—while Lord Silverbridge was alone in a certain apartment in the house in Carlton Terrace which was called his own sitting-room, the name was brought him of a gentleman who was anxious to see him. He had seen his father and had used all the eloquence of which he was master—but not quite with the effect which he had desired. His father had been very kind, but he, too, had been eloquent—and had, as is often the case with orators, been apparently more moved by his own words than by those of his adversary. If he had not absolutely declared himself as irrevocably hostile to Miss Boncassen he had not said a word that might be supposed to give token of assent.

Silverbridge, therefore, was moody, contemplative, and desirous of solitude. Nothing that the duke had said had shaken him. He was still sure of his pearl, and quite determined that he would wear it. Various thoughts were running through his brain. What if he were to abdicate the title and become a republican? He was inclined to think that he could not abdicate, but he was quite sure that no one could prevent him from going to America and calling himself Mr. Palliser. That his father would forgive him and accept the daughter-in-law brought to him, were he in the first place to marry without sanction, he felt quite sure. What was there that his father would not forgive? But then Isabel would not assent to this. He was turning it all in his head, and ever and anon trying to relieve his mind by Clarissa, which he was reading in conformity with his father's advice, when a gentleman's card was put into his hand. "Whatever does he want here?" he said to himself; and then he ordered that the gentleman might be shown up. The gentleman in question was our old friend Dolly Longstaff. Dolly Longstaff and Silverbridge had been intimate as young men are. But they

were not friends, nor, as far as Silverbridge knew, had Dolly ever set his foot in that house before. "Well, Dolly," said he, "what's the matter now?"

"I suppose you are surprised to see me?"

"I didn't think that you were ever up so early." It was at this time almost noon.

"Oh, come now, that's nonsense. I can get up as early as anybody else. I have changed all that for the last four months. I was at breakfast this morning very soon after ten."

"What a miracle! Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Well, yes—there is. Of course you are surprised to see me?"

"You never were here before; and therefore it is odd."

"It is odd; I felt that myself. And when I tell you what I have come about you will think it more odd. I know I can trust you with a secret."

"That depends, Dolly."

"What I mean is, I know you are good-natured. There are ever so many fellows, that are one's most intimate friends, that would say anything on earth they could that was ill-natured."

"I hope they are not my friends."

"Oh, yes, they are. Think of Glasslough, or Popplecourt, or Hindes! If they knew anything about you that you didn't want to have known—about a young lady or anything of that kind—don't you think they'd tell everybody?"

"A man can't tell anything he doesn't know."

"That's true. I had thought of that myself. But then there's a particular reason for my telling you this. It is about a young lady! You won't tell; will you?"

"No, I won't. But I can't see why on earth you should come to me. You are ever so many years older than I am."

"I had thought of that too. But you are just the person I must tell. I want you to help me."

These last words were said in a whisper, and Dolly as he said them had drawn nearer to his friend. Silverbridge remained in suspense, saying nothing by way of encouragement. Dolly, either in love with his own mystery, or doubtful of his own purpose, sat still, looking eagerly at his companion. "What the mischief is it?" asked Silverbridge impatiently.

"I have quite made up my own mind."

"That's a good thing at any rate."

"I am not what you would have called a marrying sort of man."

"I should have said — no. But I suppose most men do marry sooner or later."

"That's just what I said to myself. It has to be done, you know. There are three different properties coming to me. At least, one has come already."

"You're a lucky fellow."

"I've made up my mind; and when I say a thing I mean to do it."

"But what can I do?"

"That's just what I'm coming to. If a man does marry, I think he ought to be attached to her." To this, as a broad proposition, Silverbridge was ready to accede. But, regarding Dolly as a middle-aged sort of fellow, one of those men who marry because it is convenient to have a house kept for them, he simply nodded his head. "I am awfully attached to her," Dolly went on to say.

"That's all right."

"Of course there are fellows who marry girls for their money. I've known men who have married their grandmothers."

"Not really!"

"That kind of thing. When a woman is old it does not much matter who she is. But my one! She's not old!"

"Nor rich?"

"Well; I don't know about that. But I'm not after her money. Pray understand that. It's because I'm downright fond of her. She's an American."

"A what?" said Silverbridge, startled.

"You know her. That's the reason I've come to you. It's Miss Boncassen." A dark frown came across the young man's face. That all this should be said to him was disgusting. That an owl like that should dare to talk of loving Miss Boncassen was offensive to him. "It's because you know her that I've come to you. She thinks that you're after her," Dolly as he said this lifted himself quickly up in his seat, and nodded his head mysteriously as he looked into his companion's face. It was as much as though he should say, "I see you are surprised, but so it is." Then he went on. "She does, the pert poppet!" This was almost too much for Silverbridge; but still he contained himself. "She won't look at me, because she has got it into her head that perhaps some day she may be Duchess of Omnium! That of course is out of the question."

"Upon my word all this seems to me

to be so very—very—distasteful that I think you had better say nothing more about it."

"It is distasteful," said Dolly; "but the truth is I am so downright—what you may call enamoured——"

"Don't talk such stuff as that here," said Silverbridge, jumping up. "I won't have it."

"But I am. There is nothing I wouldn't do to get her. Of course it's a good match for her. I've got three separate properties; and when the governor goes off I shall have a clear fifteen thousand a year."

"Oh, bother!"

"Of course that's nothing to you, but it is a very tidy income for a commoner. And how is she to do better?"

"I don't know how she could do much worse," said Silverbridge in a transport of rage. Then he pulled his moustache in vexation, angry with himself that he should have allowed himself to say even a word on so preposterous a supposition. Isabel Boncassen and Dolly Longstaff! It was Titania and Bottom over again. It was absolutely necessary that he should get rid of this intruder, and he began to be afraid that he could not do this without using language which would be uncivil. "Upon my word," he said, "I think you had better not talk about it any more. The young lady is one for whom I have a very great respect."

"I mean to marry her," said Dolly, thinking thus to vindicate himself.

"You might as well think of marrying one of the stars!"

"One of the stars!"

"Or a royal princess!"

"Well! Perhaps that is your opinion, but I can't say that I agree with you. I don't see why she shouldn't take me. I can give her a portion which you may call A 1 out of the peerage. I can bring her into society. I can make an English lady of her."

"You can't make anything of her—except to insult her—and me too by talking of her."

"I don't quite understand this," said the unfortunate lover getting up from his seat. "Very likely she won't have me. Perhaps she has told you so."

"She never mentioned your name to me in her life. I don't suppose she remembers your existence."

"But I say that there can be no insult in such a one as me asking such a one as

her to be my wife. To say that she doesn't remember my existence is absurd."

"Why should I be troubled with all this?"

"Because I think you're making a fool of her, and because I'm honest. That's why," said Dolly with much energy. There was something in this which partly reconciled Silverbridge to his despised rival. There was a touch of truth about the man, though he was so utterly mistaken in his ideas. "I want you to give over in order that I may try again. I don't think you ought to keep a girl from her promotion, merely for the fun of a flirtation. Perhaps you're fond of her—but you won't marry her. I am fond of her, and I shall."

After a minute's pause, Silverbridge resolved that he would be magnanimous. "Miss Boncassen is going to be my wife," he said.

"Your wife!"

"Yes—my wife. And now I think you will see that nothing further can be said about this matter."

"Duchess of Omnium!"

"She will be Lady Silverbridge."

"Oh, of course she'll be that first. Then I've got nothing further to say. I'm not going to enter myself to run against you. Only I shouldn't have believed it if anybody else had told me."

"Such is my good fortune."

"Oh, ah—yes; of course. That is one way of looking at it. Well, Silverbridge, I'll tell you what I shall do; I shall hook it."

"No, no; not you."

"Yes, I shall. I daresay you won't believe me, but I've got such a feeling about me here"—as he said this he laid his hand upon his heart—"that if I stayed I should go in for hard drinking. I shall take the great Asiatic tour. I know a fellow that wants to go, but he hasn't got any money. I daresay I shall be off before the end of next month. You don't know any fellow who would buy half-a-dozen hunters; do you?" Silverbridge shook his head. "Good-bye," said Dolly in a melancholy tone; "I am sure I am very much obliged to you for telling me. If I'd known you'd meant it, I shouldn't have meddled, of course. Duchess of Omnium!"

"Look here, Dolly; I have told you what I should not have told anyone, but I wanted to screen the young lady's name."

"It was so kind of you."

"Do not repeat it. It is a kind of thing that ladies are particular about. They choose their own time for letting

everybody know." Then Dolly promised to be as mute as a fish, and took his departure.

Silverbridge had felt, towards the end of the interview, that he had been arrogant to the unfortunate man—particularly in saying that the young lady would not remember the existence of such a suitor—and had also recognised a certain honesty in the man's purpose, which had not been the less honest because it was so absurd. Actuated by the consciousness of this, he had swallowed his anger, and had told the whole truth. Nevertheless, things had been said which were horrible to him. This buffoon of a man had called his Isabel a—pert poppet!—How was he to get over the remembrance of such an offence? And then the wretch had declared that he was—enamoured! There was sacrilege in the term when applied by such a man to Isabel Boncassen. He had thoughts of days to come, when everything would be settled, when he might sit close to her, and call her pretty names—when he might in sweet familiarity tell her that she was a little Yankee and a fierce republican, and "chaff" her about the stars and stripes; and then, as he pictured the scene to himself in his imagination, she would lean upon him and would give him back his chaff, and would call him an aristocrat and would laugh at his titles. As he thought of all this he would be proud with the feeling that such privileges would be his own. And now this wretched man had called her a pert poppet!

There was a sanctity about her—a divinity which made it almost a profanity to have talked about her at all to such a one as Dolly Longstaff. She was his Holy of Holies, at which vulgar eyes should not even be allowed to gaze. It had been a most unfortunate interview. But this was clear; that, as he had announced his engagement to such a one as Dolly Longstaff, the matter now would admit of no delay. He would explain to his father that as tidings of the engagement had got abroad, honour to the young lady would compel him to come forward openly as her suitor at once. If this argument might serve him, then perhaps this intrusion would not have been altogether a misfortune.

AGAINST THE STREAM.

SOME men seem born to go against the stream. I wasn't. At least, if I was, my natal arrangements were somehow rather

mixed and my ideas were not adapted to my destiny. But I have known many men who never were so happy as when going in the exactly opposite direction to everyone and everything around them—men who, in some previous period of metempsychosis were clearly of the salmon tribe, to whom the only *raison d'être* of a torrent was to give them something to swim against.

Dicky Springer was a salmon in some very recent stage of existence, and for a fish of his inches—he could not have run at the outside to more than half a score of pounds—showed, I'll be bound to say, as good sport as any silver-sided aristocrat of his season. It was a good man that landed Dicky, and with good tackle "at that." I don't say much about the fly. Unless fins have more effect on temperament than I fancy they have, our Richard would have risen to the bare hook if only dangled before his nose with sufficient provocation. But the gut must be sound, and the rod tough, and the wielder thereof a past master of his craft, that finally prevailed upon poor Dick to exchange the sparkling turmoil of his native stream for the pensive retirement of the basket. It must have been a terrible moment to poor Dicky when as each season of his finny life drew to an end, he could no longer close his relaxing scales against the conviction that for the present at least the game was up, and he must be content for a time to drop downstream and recruit his failing energy and exhausted nervous system with a course of sea-bathing. There were spring tides of course, and currents and gales of wind; and you may depend upon it, our Richard could pass an examination in this sort with any varietal pilot of the seas. But Dick's heart was yearning all the time for a good strong steady stream, a hundred miles long at least, with swirling rapids here and there, and rushing weirs that had to be taken with a spurt and a spring, and gave a fellow assurance that he really had a backbone in him somewhere. This present human existence must be a sort of little millennium to Dicky, for in season or out of season there is always a strong current running somewhere, and in season or out of season Dick is always full swim against it.

I might have known what was coming when one Friday night, some two months or more ago, Dick came bursting into the room where Harry and I were smoking our last pipe, and insisted on our walk-

ing up to town with him next morning instead of taking the District train as usual to the foot of the Temple Gardens. I knew, too, what was coming off to-morrow morning, or might have known if I had thought of it, for a man doesn't live anywhere within several stones'-throws of Hammersmith Bridge without knowing when the Oxford and Cambridge race is to be rowed, even if that pleasant little side-ways peep of the river from my bedroom window, which was one of my main inducements in taking the apartments, had not been thoughtfully blocked up for the last twenty-four hours by a huge stand specially erected for the occasion. But somehow one never does think of these things—at least I didn't. So I just pushed over the whiskey-bottle and the tobacco-jar to the new arrival with a careless, "All right, old fellow, if Harry's game for it!" And Harry was game, of course. He is as sure to be game for anything that anyone else proposes as to shirk the trouble of any original suggestion on his own account. Harry, you must know, is my big brother. My little brother he was a quarter of a century or so since, when half-a-dozen years prior-geniture gave me a temporary advantage. Nowadays the tables are turned, and Harry, over six feet four in his stocking feet and broad in proportion, patronises his elder with a calm unconsciousness that is sometimes a little exasperating. Dick and Harry are great allies; at least Dick is always bullying and pitching into Harry, who seems to like being bullied and pitched into, and follows Dick in his perverse rushes up stream with precisely the same philosophic imperturbability with which he will float with me along the rising tide, as a sensible man should. For myself, I am a medium mortal—neither big enough, like Harry, for a lordly indifference on such minor matters, nor condensed enough, like Dick, to feel an absolute necessity for handicapping one's superfluous energies by opposition of some kind. When we ran down to San Carlo the carnival before last, I was always careful to ascertain which way the game was going, and always backed the winning colour—in intention at all events. Harry threw his five-franc pieces here and there with a calm conviction that "It's all the same thing, old man," which wasn't in the least shaken by any mere accident of gain or loss. Dick, of course, invariably betted on the colour which hadn't turned up; and when it didn't turn up again put on a

heavier stake. In any street row the opposite side of the way always seems to me the shortest as well as the pleasantest path. Harry, on the contrary, saunters calmly on, this side or that as the case may be, and in either case, unless Dick be with us, turns up placidly on the further side with his careless hands in the same pockets as before. Dick gravitates to the centre, as a straw in a Maelstrom, and we fight our way in to recover his remains. They are sure to be found either engaged in single combat with the biggest member of the mob, or trampled under the feet of its most numerous section.

So when we turned into the Bridge Road at seven o'clock that nice foggy March morning, I find myself suddenly swept off my feet by a roaring cataract of humanity pressing steadily in the direction of the river. If all London had not been quite certain to be streaming in one direction, what temptation would there have been to Dick Springer to set off in the other?

Fortunately I am what the sailors call under the lee of Harry, and though even he is for the moment carried considerably out of his course as the full strength of the tide catches him suddenly on the flank, the force of the shock is to me considerably broken, and I soon find myself heading up stream in Harry's wake. Another minute and we are out of the strength of the stream and in the slack water on the other side of the road, railed off as it were by a line of animated "blue posts," for the benefit of the carriage company, which somehow seems on this occasion to bear a curiously small proportion to that on foot. As we emerge into this freer space, and are able to look around in comparative leisure, we are aware of a temporary interruption to the steady flow of the current. A little sort of eddy seems to have set itself up some half-dozen yards lower down, and the stream grows agitated and breaks its bounds, swaying out over the space sacred to the carriage company which so persistently fails to arrive. Then a couple of the blue-coated sentries momentarily desert their station, plunge gallantly into the swirling tide, and presently emerge, conducting between them Dick, very dirty, very breathless, and very far from that spruce and dapper trim in which he had set out ten minutes ago; but full of fight as ever, and more than half inclined to quarrel with his rescuers for having deprived him of the opportunity of forcing his way single-handed against the stream.

And, indeed, if our Richard is ever to be really happy in this world now is his opportunity. The wonderful unanimity which so impressed itself on Mr. Puff in the rare agreements of the stage is mere centrifugal dissension compared with that which on this occasion appears to animate the whole population of the metropolis. There must be some one surely in town besides our three selves who does not propose to spend the prime of a foggy March morning on the chance of being able to catch over somebody else's shoulder a half-minute's glimpse of a couple of rows of blue and white jerseys on their way to possible glory up at Barnes? But looked at from a Hammer-smith point of view this seems to be the one idea of which the metropolitan mind is at this moment capable. Not that there is any particular excitement about it. We always take our pleasure sadly, and there is certainly nothing about getting up at unholy hours on a raw March morning, in tramping for an hour or two through a bone-piercing north-easter, and in being tortured for another hour or two in a soul-quelling fog on a very muddy river-bank, at all calculated to impart any special hilarity to that habitually mournful operation. One might almost suppose it a religious duty—if it were not for the extreme religiousness of its performance. Nobody seems ever left at home to look on, for the windows along the roadside are untenanted, and not a nightcap wags at us as we pass. Everybody is in the street, I suppose, and everybody presses steadily on with a sort of grim determination to be in the front row somewhere at all events, if the disappointed back rows do project them—as the disappointed back rows probably will—up to their knees, or thereabouts, in mud and water for their pains.

Perhaps it is this spurious severity of purpose on the part of the pleasure-seekers which so curiously detracts from the surely legitimate self-satisfaction of the conscientious minority. Surely, if ever one has a right to a glow of conscious virtue it is under circumstances such as these. But somehow I could not feel virtuous at all. I could hardly feel less so if I alone were bent on idleness and all this rushing throng was on its way duty-wards. I could not feel less of that glow of conscious merit which has been the appanage of the Industrious Apprentice ever since that remarkable *lusus Naturæ* first dawned on an unappreciated world. It is not merely that the anything but industrious Apprentice, who forms I suppose at least

a third of the riverward throng, greets me as he scuffles past with scornful and injurious gestures; that 'Arry, duly decked with ribbon of blue, openly confides to the temporary possessor of his h'arm and 'eart his conviction that I am a "cure" and a "mug;" that the very policeman on extra duty clearly lays upon my misdirected shoulders the onus of having dragged him from his comfortable bed at intempestive hours, even if he does not, as I more than half believe he does, credit me with being a swell mobman, whose lay has already turned out so well that he is retiring to place his swag in security before going for another haul. It is that I myself am doubtful on the score of my own virtue, that I cannot rid myself of a sort of feeling that to fly so very decidedly in the face of public opinion must surely be wrong; that however allowable it may be from an abstract point of view to go down betimes to one's office and open one's letters, and meet one's bills, and provide generally for wants physical and mental of Master Tommy and Miss Clara, and the rest of the juvenile tribe at home, there must surely be something in the occasion which puts altogether another aspect on the case, as though a man should attack an orange in the stalls of Her Majesty's Theatre or walk down Regent Street in the costume of his private bath-room. It is quite a relief when on the opposite side of the way three people suddenly stop, consult with animation for a minute or so, throw something into air, catch it again, examine it thoughtfully, and then turn resolutely Londonwards with much slapping of the back of one of their number by the other two, who appear to appreciate the jest much better than he. Are they really going to— Bah! not a bit of it. They are only going to "ave a drain" at the public-house half-a-dozen steps back, and in another minute they have had it and are off riverwards again with greater vigour than before.

One satisfaction there is at all events. Not one in a dozen of all these people will catch so much as a glimpse of the boat race. They say that if a train were never to start at all somebody would still manage to be late for it. Here we are close to the Addison Road Station, and if there be any faith in clocks or tides, the boats must have started a good ten minutes ago. Yet the stream, though thinner, is as persistent as ever. It is not till close upon Holland Park that the last sky-blue ribbon

passes panting on its way, this time in the crimson bonnet of a stalwart young matron, whose youthful little lord and master, trotting breathlessly by her side with the blue-rosetted hope of the ancient house of Robinson in his arms, is doubtless thinking with joy and satisfaction of that University struggle barely a year since, when the momentous question was popped as they drove home in that snug corner of Jones's market-cart, and Elizabeth Brown gushingly named an early day for becoming Mrs. Robinson.

And so the every-day City current sets in again, and Harry knocks the ashes out of the pipe which has hitherto reposed placidly between his philosophic lips; and Dick, who has cannoned off every third man in the crowd, till you might fancy he was bent on an experimental study of the tangential curves, sets his hat straight on his head again, counts up his missing buttons, repairs damages generally; and I emerge from my position of safety in Harry's wake, and devoutly pledge myself never again to navigate London streets against the stream.

Naturally I keep this vow most religiously till an opportunity offers for breaking it. Why I should have selected Derby Day for that long-promised visit to my old friend on the other side of Clapham Common I know no more than I know why nine-tenths of the rest of London should choose to grill themselves alive on that day in the dust and turmoil of Epsom Downs. Of the "turf" and all that passes thereon I am as blissfully ignorant as though I were already under it. For ought I know—or care—Bend Or might have been Bar Sinister or "bar one," for the matter of that. I knew certainly that Jack Bamber had written to me more than a fortnight ago to say that he had made up a jolly party for the 26th, and was going to tool the drag down, and would keep a place for me, which I must fill under Heaven knows what Bacchanalian pains and penalties. But then Jack, who is popularly supposed among ourselves to be the best amateur coachman in London, and who has been backed before now to take a fly from any ear in his team without disturbing the equanimity of its wearer, is always making jolly parties and tooling down drags, and threatening with dire Bacchanalian penalties any one of his acquaintances who will not commit his only neck to his care. I have observed, too, that this morning there has certainly been something of an

epidemic about. My clerk has been taken suddenly ill, and is quite unable to come to business, but will make a point of being all right to-morrow. My solicitor, from whom I have not heard since the day before yesterday about that troublesome business of Wind-bagge Whistler, has a 'cadache, and is obliged to keep away from business for the day. The very clerk who conveys the intelligence is not the right clerk, of whom I might at least have enquired if anything new has occurred, but an h-less underling, who grins when I ask, a little savagely, whether Mr. Pouncet has a headache too, and replies significantly that he wouldn't be astonished, for "they mostly 'as about now." But it is not till I am fairly on my way to Clapham, and remark casually to my neighbour on the knife-board of the tram upon the singular unanimity with which the population of the neighbourhood appear to have established themselves for the evening at their respective front windows, that I really learn the day I have chosen for my expedition, and find myself once more full swim against the stream.

Not quite in such isolated fashion, however, this time as the last. Indeed, till we are fairly past Kennington Park the stream is all setting in the outward direction as though the half of London which this morning had determined not to go to the Derby had by the evening altered whatever may have served it for a mind, and was bent upon getting to Epsom, at all events in good time for the Oaks. Thus it becomes clear that this seeing the people "come home" is a recognised excitement for such portion of the neighbourhood as mightn't, couldn't, wouldn't, or, I was going to say, shouldn't go themselves. And the neighbourhood follows up its recognised excitement with a singleness of purpose which to the philosophic mind might afford food for reflection. Why people coming home from the Derby in a dusty, dirty, draggled condition should be better worth looking at than people going, equally dustily, dirtily, and draggled, in the opposite direction, I, for one, cannot venture to surmise. But so it is. Here, for instance, comes a party, which to me, who am not of the neighbourhood, has a decidedly striking, not to say noteworthy aspect. At a distance it has the appearance of an ordinary waggon-load of coals coming along at a ponderous trot behind its three big black horses. A little nearer, and the coal-sacks appear to be alive, swaying to and fro and

wagging the little tied-up knots at top in most eccentric fashion. A little nearer and the tied-up knots become heads, the coal-sacks develope into men, and we are in presence of a party of jovial coalheavers, a couple of dozen strong at least, full of beer and merriment to the eyebrows, making evening hideous with the doleful burden of some unknown ditty in two hundred verses, twenty-four different keys, and no particular tune at all. A twenty-fifth comrade has failed in obtaining standing room in the body of the waggon, and occupies a precarious post on the great weighing-machine that swings behind, whereon he performs a private war-dance of his own to a special and independent melody, considerably diversified by the equilibric necessities of the situation. But the harmonie waggon is travelling the wrong way, and the neighbourhood regards it with the sublime indifference, with which your true Londoner would encounter an earthquake and pair if it happened to take a turn down Fleet Street. That wagonette, now, with its dusty wheels, its broken-down cattle, and its weary freight of draggled humanity, is quite another affair. There is no harmony among its passengers, nor, for the matter of that, any overt discord either. What with the sun and the dust, and the turmoil and the—well, yes, perhaps the champagne likewise, or what passes for champagne in a guinea hamper on Derby day, the tenants of the wagonette are in very staid and sober mood, indeed as little disposed to make sport for their neighbours as to enjoy it for themselves. But their interest for the neighbourhood is not to be measured by such tests as these. They are coming home from the Derby. So the neighbourhood gathers closer to its windows, and rubs up its spectacles, and brings its opera-glasses to bear with that promptness and unanimity which nothing less than a firm conviction of its being the fashionable thing to do could possibly ensure.

Taking a bird's-eye view from the commanding elevation of my tram-car knife-board I am struck with the vastness of the scale on which all along the road on either hand preparations are being made for tea. High tea sometimes, with a cold joint, and possibly a lobster, or an elegant pyramid of prawns. But in any case tea, and tea on a patriarchal scale. If these mounds of bread-and-butter, these groves of "creases," these battalions of cups and saucers, these regiments of chairs—not

always, by the way, of the orthodox parlour fashion, but eked out here and there with humble cane-seated auxiliaries from the bedrooms—are all intended for the wants of the ordinary family, either the Kennington Road must devote itself with remarkable unanimity to the evasion of the Common Lodging House Acts or there must be something in the atmosphere of the Surrey side which should make prudent young married people of not absolutely unlimited means very chary of settling down there. Fortunately there is another alternative, and I very soon arrive at the conclusion that it is fashionable “form” in the Kennington Road on Derby evening to invite your friends to tea.

And now the plot thickens, and as the tramcar draws up on the top of the hill at the corner of Clapham Common we find ourselves fairly in the midst of a crowd which would do no dishonour to the course itself. It takes a strongish force of police here to keep the road, and all along the footpath on either side the vendors of refreshment, solid and liquid, of Japanese parasols, and wonderful paper plumes, and back-scratchers, and false noses, and those villainous squirting abominations which everyone should combine to put down by severest Lynch law if no other means be found available, are plying as brisk a trade as their more enterprising brethren away on Epsom Downs.

“Our Henglish carnival, sir,” sententiously observes a slightly inebriated citizen, apparently of the shoemaking persuasion, to whom I apologise for an involuntary assault committed under the pressure of the crowd. And certainly if the scene lacks some of the brighter characteristics of that eccentric institution it is by no means unlike an undress rehearsal of one. The Kennington Road is not exactly the Corso, nor does Clapham Common, even under the glimpses of sunshine which occasionally struggle down through the smoke, and dust, and gathering clouds, remind one with altogether irresistible force of the Cascine, or the Chiaja, or the Promenade des Anglais. But they bear much the same relation to the old familiar scenes as the daylight practice of the ballet or pantomime to the night performance, with its colour and glitter and slightly tinselly pomp. And there is something of the daylight sobriety about it too. When the night comes, and the gas and limelight are turned on, and Harlequin shall have exchanged the canvas jacket

and grimy knickerbockers of everyday life for the tight-fitting suit of many-coloured spangles, and Mr. Merriman shall be no longer, to outward appearance at all events, overwhelmed with the responsibility of drilling a score or two of specially tragic supers into the intricacies of his comic business, then no doubt we shall be very gay and very brilliant indeed. At present it must be owned we walk through our business in a rather perfunctory manner. We haven't even any confetti to throw—we could hardly expect to be supplied with bouquets at half-a-crown apiece—and though the interests of the sartorial community have been no doubt sufficiently consulted, it is one thing to see your neighbour's coat powdered with mere ordinary road-dust, no matter how many inches thick, and quite another to have the powdering of it yourself.

So there is, it must be owned, a certain air of unreality about the scene, which even false noses do not altogether remove. Some of us, indeed, seem quite incapable of acting up to our noses. Here comes a weary wayfarer fast asleep with his nose swinging irresponsibly between his knees. Here is another evidently quite oblivious of the fact that he is still in situ, and evidently congratulating himself on the impression he is making upon the youngest and prettiest of a barouche of girls, which, as luck will have it, has pulled up at the Alexandra for a mouthful of hay and water just alongside his own green-curtained hansom. The majority of us carry our noses frankly in our hands, or drop them quietly over the side of the carriage into the road, whence they are promptly rescued by adventurous Arab youth before more than a dozen or so of wheels have passed over them, and carefully pinched and patted once more into such semblance of shape as may at least fit them for the simple uses of the tribe.

And so the rout rolls on, and the stream of carriages, and carts, and cabs, and omnibuses, and vans, and improvised non-descripts unclassable even by the licensing authorities of Somerset House or Scotland Yard, pass ever broader and thicker, and nigger minstrels hanging on to omnibus steps and tailboards drop off at sight of a likely “pitch,” and raise the husky ghosts of Nancy Lee or Biddy McCarthy till summarily summoned to “pass away.” And dusty-throated wayfarers force their way into the aristocratic coffee-room of the Alexandra, and expend what little voice

remains to them from much shouting of the odds in full-flavoured remonstrance against the despotic ukase which refuses the supply of the much-desired beer save as accompaniment of altogether superfluous dinner, and I am anxiously looking out for a gap in the rushing string of vehicles sufficiently wide to afford some hope of arriving with life on the opposite side of the way, when, swish! my hat rises suddenly from my head as a long whip-lash comes deftly curling round it, and a friendly yell greets me above the uproar from the roof of Jack Bamber's drag, as that worthy pulls up his smoking team right across my contemplated path.

Downimans! Bosh! Fancy any one expecting to find Frank Downimans at home on the Derby Day. A pretty sort of fellow I am, and a nice mess I've made of it. But it's never too late to mend, and there's room up behind now, or on the roof, or between the wheels or somewhere, and, in short, I am in the hands of the Philistines, and, on the whole, not sorry to be there, and in another minute I am rolling along homewards on the roof of Jack's drag, and so ends my second swim against the stream.

A SUN-PICTURE.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART III.

A FORTNIGHT had passed since Miss Newnham had announced her predilection for dining out; a time that had said many unknown things to Nona.

Mr. Douglas Courtney, who had come to the vicarage to read for an examination, had been much occupied it is true, but he had found time to take a number of walks in the evening and to pay a morning call at Mrs. Newnham's.

On that occasion the maid-of-all-work, her arms bare to the elbow and redolent of soap-suds, had been lost in wonderment at the expensiveness of his appearance. The children, anxious not to miss any little excitement, crowded into the hall, and watched the apparition with awe. Finally Mr. Courtney had placed himself in a rickety chair that well-nigh prostrated him on the drawing-room carpet had he not promptly secured a safer and more abiding resting-place.

Mrs. Newnham, limp and joyless as she was by nature, and not holding with rose-coloured views of this world or the next, was not aggressively elated at this young gentleman's advent, or indeed cast down at

his departure. She had heard he was staying at the vicarage; her daughter had mentioned meeting him. She was sorry to say Nona was out, had gone into the village. How were Mr. and Miss Gibbins? The vicar was doubtless a sound divine, but it could not be expected she could listen to another, who had taken the place of her dear husband, with the same edification, and so forth.

Mr. Courtney agreed it was impossible. When could Nona come in? Over there on the round table was a photograph album, placed sideways with elaborate carelessness, along with a head-mat, a keepsake, and a hideous pink vase—was there a photograph of Nona in it? Well, he would in all decency have to go now, so perhaps he would not be able to see Nona at all that day.

These reflections proved that the last fortnight had not been barren of results.

At tea that evening Mrs. Newnham mentioned the afternoon call. Nona had heard the exciting news from the children and the maid-of-all-work.

"I do wish, mother, when people come you would tell the children not to crowd round them as if they were a Punch and Judy show, or a performing poodle," said the eldest sister; "I think I shall have to inform Jane that Christian young women generally clothe themselves to the wrist when they open the hall door."

"I'm sure I do the best I can; perhaps when you have a house of your own you will manage things better than your mother. Children, hold your tongues, and give me the bag of stockings," said Mrs. Newnham, like the martyr she was.

"I didn't mean to grumble; forgive me, mother, and let me help you," replied Nona.

The rain was beating against the window.

"I shall not see him to-night; how stupid I was to go out," she thought.

For what can be more healthy after reading all day than a brisk walk at night, and what more natural that such walks should lead past gardens where there are pretty girls?

In this way had Douglas Courtney combined Nona's society with much study.

The girl, who at all times indulged a passion for open air, opined that it would be a flagrant absurdity to shut herself within doors because people chose to walk past the garden wall; and of course, if a gentleman to whom one has been introduced asks one a civil question, one is in

common politeness bound to answer him. Mr. Courtney, on fine evenings, found an infinite number of civil questions to ask Miss Newnham, and she, despite the gathering darkness, was in courtesy constrained to reply.

"I wish," said Nona at the little gate at the end of the garden on the evening before the formal visit, "I wish you would come and call upon my mother. I don't half like seeing you like this—it seems somehow secret."

"I don't believe you care one jot if I come or if I stay away altogether," he replied gloomily. "You are always telling me not to come, or asking me if they know at the vicarage, or getting up some 'no followers allowed' business to scare a fellow off." For Mr. Courtney was as other men in the middle stage of the tender passion, inclined to be boorish and unreasonable. "Why, Nona"—he had never called her Nona before, but it slipped out now unconsciously, even glibly, as if she had been ever thus in his thoughts—"if you went to the Canary Islands or Timbuctoo I should be bound to follow you; I couldn't help myself."

"But I don't want you to go to Timbuctoo or the Canary Islands. I was merely suggesting that you should come to pay a formal visit and make the acquaintance of my mother."

"Of course I'll do anything you tell me," said Douglas in lover-like meekness. "I don't think I can come to-morrow, though; it will have to be the day after. Mind you're at home."

"That's right; be a good boy and do as you're told," said Nona with attempted smartness, "and you will grow up a source of pride and joy to your parents. By the bye, have you got any?"

"Ye-es—usual number; and a rum old customer the governor is."

"Why?" asked the girl to this touchingly filial remark.

"Well, you see," he rejoined, drawing a fancy pattern on the gravel with his stick, "he has lots of money, but such rum notions—won't allow me anything at all, at least not anything worth mentioning" (about enough to maintain a respectable family) "until I get some appointment, or work hard at some profession or other. Now work don't suit my constitution—never did. I tell the governor he's bringing me to an early grave. What, with the mental exertion of 'Greats' at Oxford, and the brown sherry at the Middle-

Temple, it's a marvel I'm alive," said this rudely healthy young gentleman, stretching his as yet muscular upper extremities.

"Poor fellow!" said his audience. "So you have to sit poked up reading all day."

It seemed to the girl little short of sacrilege to compel anything so handsome and delectable as the individual before her to do anything distasteful to him.

"It is too bad of your father," she exclaimed sympathetically, as if that long-suffering gentleman were the hardest of taskmasters. "So what are you going to do? What is this examination?"

"Oh, it's the Colonial Office; very decent sort of work when you once get in; only there's this competitive exam business before you get in, and there's an immovable and inexorable old governor, who won't hand out if I don't."

After this followed the usual "sweet sorrow" occasioned by the protracted hour, and the ominous voice of Mrs. Newnham gathering in the missing for the night from the garden door.

On the morrow Mr. Douglas Courtney was impelled on the luckless visit in Miss Newnham's absence.

The rain pattered against the window that night. The solitary candle flickered with the wind that was invited so liberally through countless holes and cracks in wainscot and sash. As Mrs. Newnham lifted up her voice, crying in her nocturnal monologue over the expensiveness of children in general and the instability of shoe-leather in particular, Nona's thoughts were at liberty to wander away.

"Yes," said the rain to her fancy, "I shall rain, rain, all the week, and then your fine lover will go away."

And the wind rattled the casement and shivered the magenta roses and paper waterfalls that in courtesy are said to ornament fire-grates.

"Yes," said the still small voice that on such occasions never fails to offer the most comforting suggestions, "he is at the vicarage. They have just done dinner. The fire—of course they have lighted a fire—is burning brightly; the lamps are shaded discreetly. Theophilus—yes, Theophilus is deep in a book in a luxurious arm-chair, while Cynthia, in that white cashmere, is singing an impassioned Italian love-song, while he is turning over the leaves." . . . The candle was flickering in its socket; she was back again in the

dismal little room. The widow was speaking: "You need not light another candle, Nona; we may as well go to bed, and finish these stockings by daylight." And forthwith the ladies retired.

The next day brought no change. It rained continually with an earnest steady downpour.

"He might have made some excuse, and come to see me," thought Nona; "but if it pours cats and dogs to-morrow it won't prevent me from going to see—Cynthia!"

But the next day the sun shone forth merrily, and by the time the girl was on her way to pay her visit, the roads were nearly dry, the day bright and warm.

Miss Gibbins was charmed to see Nona. She insisted on calling her brother from his study. "Oh, pray don't disturb him, I know he must be busy," said the visitor, wondering, and yet not daring to ask, after the whereabouts of another man.

Theophilus, with his slouching gait and timid smile, appeared, and after him (how desirable after all is existence!) the younger more compact figure of Douglas Courtney.

The conversation of necessity became general; and when one has something to impart, or something to learn from the beloved object opposite (and when has one not?) there is nothing so wearying or exasperating as a general conversation.

Mr. Courtney, for instance, did not enter into the spirit of the thing, but, sitting apart, kept playing with Nona's little umbrella. He glanced at Mr. Gibbins, and then got up and gazed abstractedly out of the window, apparently unconsciously leaning the umbrella against the sill.

Refreshed by the prospect of the park, he now joined the group.

Nona, who had kept up an animated talk, and also admired the view, with that facility for doing two things at once that alone is compassed by the female soul, now rose to leave. She was of course accompanied by Theophilus to the door.

"You must be sure and dine with us some day next week," Cynthia said; to which remark Nona mentally added "when he perhaps has gone!"

As the vicar proceeded back to his study, Mr. Courtney was quite surprised to find that Miss Newnham had left her umbrella.

"Oh! do run after her with it," cried the guileless Cynthia; "there's no knowing, it might rain."

In two minutes more a gentleman was accosting a lady outside the vicarage garden; one would have thought they had not met

for years, they found so much to say to each other.

"I have to go up to town for the examination to-morrow; mind you are out in the garden to-night," he was urging.

"Yes, I will be there, even if it is under the shelter of our faithful ruse de guerre," she replied, taking her lost property from his hand.

The moon shone down that night in the romantic and interesting fashion which should always attend the meetings of lovers.

"Only to think you came in all that rain. I thought you were snug at the vicarage all the time. Did you really come both nights?"

"Both nights, Nona," he replied, "and I got not so much as a glimpse or a sign of you."

"And I was so wretched," she said simply; "I thought you didn't care enough about—I mean enough to come, and I was darning stockings! So you came in the wet; do you know, I'm glad of that; it will be something to think about," she added.

There was an unknown yielding, a novel softness in her voice.

"Oh, you liked it, did you?" replied Douglas. "I can't say I did decidedly. I can't say I did. Curious the difference of opinion."

"It's like life, isn't it?" said the young girl; "you outside and miserable in the rain, I inside more miserable hearing the rain, so near; but you see it is all dark, and we never know."

She had laid her hand on his arm, her lips were trembling; he drew her to him—so near that he could feel her soft breathing on his face.

"Nona, little Nona, where do you get your serious thoughts and where your great deep eyes?"

The white lids drooped over the depths beneath, and then as the conscious soul was veiled as by a cloud, he dared to press warm lingering kisses on her hands, her cheeks, her lips.

Half an hour later Nona, reluctantly, lingeringly, preparing to withdraw herself, made the not very original remark:

"And so you must go to-morrow?" Then, with fine naïveté, "I do wish now it were not to-morrow."

"I could have gone better yesterday, little Nona. But I always make a fool of myself. I oughtn't to have said anything yet, till after the exam," he muttered to himself contritely.

Mr. Courtney, indeed, need not have blamed himself on this head, for whatever his actions, assuredly he had not committed himself in speech.

"Nona, do you know," he went on more blithely, "I always think of you as I saw you first, with the sun shining in the midst of the sunflowers. Do you know I committed a theft that day? I stole that sunflower, and I've got it still. Nona, when I am gone do you think you will remember me?"

"Well, with an effort I might; but I warn you, I have a very bad memory," said the girl, laughing in low reply.

"I should like to impress on your memory——"

The sentence was never finished; but perhaps Mr. Courtney effected his intention in his somewhat protracted parting kiss.

PART IV.

MR. THEOPHILUS GIBBINS had been much preoccupied of late. An unwonted nervousness, foreign to his phlegmatic temperament, had embarrassed his movements, causing him to start at the sound of a bell, and turn away on the unexpected appearance of lights.

For Mr. Gibbins, like the psalmist, had questioned his own soul, and discovered therein the image of Nona Newnham.

Theophilus was the only son of wealthy and pious parents. He had been nursed as it were in the odour of sanctity; he had imbibed moral truths from his earliest years. The Gibbins household had ever regarded life from the serious and religious standpoint, a circumstance that may have lent a reactionary zest to Cynthia's later frivolity of mind. She had been low-church, high-church, broad-church, and atheistical in turn, but nothing serious said much to Miss Gibbins, at any rate for any length of time.

Just now people were "speculative" in thought and mediæval in the matter of clothing, and Cynthia was as the rest.

Theophilus was of another make.

Years back he had been a slow, awkward, good-hearted boy. He grasped an idea with difficulty and digested it slowly. But once having sucked out the heart of a question, it became a portion of himself; he could as soon have parted with it as with one of his hands or feet. He was, at the same time, of that passive part of mankind that suck only the rattle, so to speak, presented to their hand; and Mr. Gibbins's rattle, as we have already seen,

had been shaken only from the serious standpoint.

The vicar had in his way reached the age of thirty-four in single unblestness when he began to conceive that Nona was the one woman who ever could or ever would suit him as a wife. Mrs. Newnham had been informed of his aspirations, and had been duly elated at future honours. It yet remained, it is true, to speak to Nona, but considering her mother's wishes and dearth of rivals it might be reasonably expected she would listen to his suit.

The vicarage had been unusually quiet all that winter. Cynthia had been absent visiting various friends, and Mr. Courtney, who was half under promise to run down at Christmas, found himself unable to leave town.

He had written to the vicar to account for non-appearance. After thanking Theophilus for his help, thanks to which he had got the berth in the Colonial Office, he went on to say that the severe illness of his father prevented him getting away. He concluded by saying: "Pray give my kindest regards to Miss Newnham; tell her I am in despair at not being able to assist at the mothers'-meetings; but pray say I shall be down the very earliest opportunity. She will understand what a deep interest I take in them."

Mr. Gibbins had not been overjoyed at this message. He found it flippant, unbecoming to tender any young lady, much less to his possible wife. He had therefore thrown the letter in the fire, marvelling the while at the curious frivolity and indelicacy of even gentlemanly men.

It must not be supposed that jealousy had anything to say to the divine's resentment. The thought of a rival did not cross his mind. Had not the worthy man taken three years to fall in love with this young lady, and over six months to reconsider his feelings? It was not given him to know what, with some people, a fortnight can effect.

Other than in this letter had Courtney shown no sign of life.

For on reflection he felt (like other men, when it is too late) it would be a shame to compromise Nona Newnham. He had gone too far, and yet not far enough. He had succumbed to his passions. At a distance reason reasserted herself. Secret and romantic attachments and indefinite

engagements, and the like, did not enter into this young gentleman's plan of life. He resolved if he saw or wrote to Nona now it must be to ask her to be his wife. And this he could not do; for although he had satisfied his father as to the Colonial Office, sickness now prevented him from receiving his reward. For this and the higher reward he must now wait with what patience he might.

In this way the winter passed away, the longest winter Nona had ever known.

At first she had stood at the little gate at the end of the garden. She had looked up the long white road, and the trees turned red and brown; then the elms, the first to shed their leaves, stood all feathery against the purple blue behind. But she did not note these changes. She was waiting for a figure—a figure that never came.

"If he does not come, he will write," she said.

But the postman proved no luckier than that long white way had been.

Perhaps the winter nights were the worst, when the snow lay round the house. Then she would roam from room to room. In the kitchen, freshly scrubbed, the maid would click her knitting-needles, the fire burning brightly, the cat gently purring in the glow. There were the saucepans shining in a row, the crickets chirping round the blaze, the children sleeping over-head, the widow casting up accounts. Tick, tick, tick, went the big kitchen clock.

"He will never come back—he has forgotten me," she said.

There was the old childhood's home in its sleepiness, its order, its drowsiness. "How can I bear it? How long will it last?" Tick, tick, went the kitchen clock; its monotony said "to the end."

But the spring time had come now, the autumn seemed a long way back.

"After all," Nona asked herself, "what have I to complain of? He never asked me to be his wife; why should I be disappointed now? Perhaps he got rather tired of Cynthia up at the vicarage, that was all, and wanted a little cheerful society after his work. Well, I never grudged him mine." Then she would go over word for word all their little scraps of talk, his look and tone, and all the things she ought to have said.

"I ought to have enjoyed it much more, for now it will never come back

again," and she thought dolefully of Mr. Gibbins's "attentions," as her mother called it.

The old dead days seemed so meaningless, so empty, before that autumn time; but that time too was dead now, leaving an aching pain at the heart. "If I could only do something exciting, go away to the end of the world, or marry somebody, or drown myself, I should get rid of this pain; and he might hear of me, perhaps remember the old time."

The garden walls seemed to crush and choke her.

As Nona ruminated, one of these exciting and slightly incongruous alternatives was about to be offered her.

A crunching of the gravel (she was at the end of the garden) betrayed the tempter in the person of Mr. Theophilus Gibbins, who was quickly approaching her along the garden walk. Perhaps he was not a dangerous temptation to the outer world—a world unbiassed by an earnest soul, if accompanied by a slouching gait and awkward feet. But in these untoward attributes it is possible lay Nona Newnham's snare. The outward form deceived only, she told herself. Grace was with those who loved and rode away.

The girl was leaning against an apple-tree, its faint pink glowing in the warm spring sunshine. Overhead the birds were singing, the sky showed blue between the tangled net of trees. There was a mild humidity in the air, the sounds and scents of spring-time were awakening from their long winter sleep.

An unusual air of solemnity, even of excitement, characterised Mr. Gibbins. The woman in Nona knew that her time had come. But even now he did not cross the long wet grass straight to where she stood, but approached her crab-wise by the more circumspect and salubrious gravel path.

She did not smile or move, but simply waited with her hands clasped together, her slight body leaning on the knotted moss-grown stem.

Neither half an hour nor a proposal of marriage had altered Miss Newnham's attitude.

"Miss Nona," gasped the unyouthful lover to her silence, "you give me then leave to hope?"

A dull apathy had taken possession of her as the vicar unburdened himself of his proposal—the proposal, like Pilgrim's

burden, he had carried about with him so long.

After the ceaseless unrest of the last few months there seemed in this opening of a new life something of numbing peace. It would delight her mother, and apparently a worthy man. Life after all was a joyless thing—what did it all signify? Perhaps in mere duty lay life's highest joy.

"You give me leave to hope," and he attempted to clasp her hand

"Hope!" What had she to do with hope? It was a word that had become without meaning in those long winter nights.

She was staring at the sky, and passed in silence away over the long lank grass.

Mr. Gibbins was wondering at the enigma presented by maidenhood and silence. After all it was but the waywardness of a young girl, he reflected, and he followed her to where she stood in the smiling spring sunshine. She was leaning against the mossy red-brick wall with a different lover in the time gone by. On her lips played a tender smile.

"Ah, that's right; you are not angry, dearest," said the vicar persuasively. He again essayed some sort of lover-like caress. She recoiled at the touch.

Turning sharply round, with burning cheeks, she said slowly:

"I cannot give you any 'hope,' Mr. Gibbins. I thought just now I would try to like you, but you see it's all too late!"

"Too late!" repeated the vicar, turning from the garden gate and gazing along the muddy road, "'Surely,' as the Psalmist says, 'surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain.'"

"Hullo, Gibbins," exclaimed an irritatingly-elated voice in his ear, while a hand grasped his own. "Just run down, you see; governor all serene again. Come down to see our mutual friends—over the wall. What is the matter?" anxiously. "They are all right?"

"In perfect bodily health," said the divine mournfully.

New lights began to beat in on the darkness of the vicar's brain.

"You are not going to——" he stammered aghast.

"Can't stop now, old fellow—tell you all about it afterwards."

The gate swung to.

Gibbins found himself without on the same road with a changed sky.

For Mr. Courtney still thinks as before that an uncommonly nice little girl lived on the other side of the wall; while his presence whispers to Nona that the winter indeed is dead.

TIRED.

WE are so tired, my heart and I,
Sweet is the swell of the poet's sigh;
Sweet is the ring of the minor chords;
Sweet is the chime of the measured words:
But, oh! when life is so hard and dull,
We miss the joy of the beautiful,
And echo it back like a bitter cry—
"We are so tired, my heart and I."

Tired of sowing the barren grains,
Tired of taking the useless pains
Of the futile faith, the unheeded word,
And the weary sickness of hope deferred;
While the counted sands drop fast away,
Through the feverish night and the restless day,
And the reeds we lean on break, one by one,
And the sad, ungranted prayers go on.

The winds sweep over the cowering plain,
Through the creeping mists sob the ceaseless rain;
The chill and heaviness all around,
Like a chain the aching temples bound;
Dream, fancy, sacrifice—what is its all?
Climbing, struggling, slip, and fall,
O'er the dull grey sea, stoops the dull grey sky;
We are so tired, my heart and I.

Break through the clouds, oh, Easter light!
Wake up, brave sense of truth and right,
Lay on the shrine of our risen Lord
The useless talent, the broken sword;
Lay there doubts, griefs, and wants, and cares,
And the erring darlings of many prayers.
From the cross on earth, to the crown on high,
Let us look together, my heart and I.

TRADITIONS OF THE CROSS.

TREES and woods have twice saved the whole world; first, by the Ark, then by the Cross; making full amends for the evil fruit of the tree in Paradise by that which was borne on the tree in Golgotha.
EVELYN.

Apart from the mystic import of the immortal tree, on which our Saviour suffered on Calvary, there are many curious speculations and legends concerning the history and nature of the wood of which it was formed.

An ancient legend referred to in the Gospel of Nicodemus, Curzon's Monasteries of the Levant, Didron's Iconography, and many other works, carries the history of the Cross back as far as the time of Adam. The substance of it is as follows:

Adam, one day, fell sick, and sent his son Seth to the Garden of Eden to ask the guardian angel for some drops of the oil of mercy, distilled from the tree of life. The angel replied that none could have that till five thousand years had passed, but

gave him a slip of the tree, which was afterwards planted on Adam's grave and grew into a beautiful tree with three branches. Some accounts differ and say that the angel gave Seth three seeds, which he planted under Adam's tongue, from which they grew into the cypress, cedar, and pine. These were subsequently carried away by Moses, who cut his rod from them, and King David transplanted them near a fountain at Jerusalem, where they grew into one magnificent tree. Under its umbrageous shade he composed his Psalms and lamented his sins. His son Solomon afterwards cut it down for a pillar in his Temple, but no one was able to fix it there. Some say it was preserved in the Temple, while others aver, with equal probability, that it formed a bridge across a marsh, which the Queen of Sheba refused to pass, being deterred by a vision of its future burden. It was afterwards buried in the Pool of Bethesda, thereby accounting for the healing properties possessed by its waters. At the Passion it floated and was taken for the Cross, or, as some say, for the upright beam. Henry Maundrell speaks of a Greek convent, about half an hour's distance from Jerusalem, where they showed him a hole in the ground under the high altar, where the stump of the tree stood. The veracious Sir John de Maundeville also says that the spot where the tree grew at Jerusalem was pointed out to him; the wood, he states, formed a bridge over the brook Cedron.

From Anselm, Aquinas, and others, we learn that the upright beam was made of the "immortal cedar;" the cross beam, of cypress; the piece on which the inscription was written, of olive; and the piece for the feet, of palm; hence the line:

Ligna crucis palma, cedrus, cupressus, oliva.

Sir John de Maundeville's account of the legend differs from this. He says the piece athwart was made of "victorious palm;" the tablet, of "peaceful olive;" the trunk, of the tree of which Adam had eaten; and the stock of cedar. Some versions say that it was made of fir, pine, and box; others of cypress, cedar, pine, and box; one names cedar for the support of the feet, cypress for the body, palm for the hands, and olive for the title. Southey, in his *Commonplace Book* and *Omniana*, says that the four kinds of wood were symbolical of the four quarters of the globe, or all mankind. Some affirm that the cross was made entirely of the stately oak. Chaucer, speaking of the Blessed Virgin, says:

Benigne branchlet of the pine tree.

The legend of The Invention of the Cross, as it is called, refers to its supposed discovery by Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, in Eusebius, A.D. 326. This "invention" was commemorated on the third of May (though many different dates and festivals have been observed in its honour), and is related by Rufinus, Socrates, Theodoret, Nicephorus, Gretsch, Hospinian, Durandus, and Sozomen; it was also supported by Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Tillemont, and Jortin. Helena was visiting Jerusalem at the age of seventy-nine, and there found three crosses buried, and the title of Pilate lying by itself. The true cross was only discovered by its healing properties on being touched, the test being applied by Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem. A church was erected over the spot where the crosses were found, and most of the true cross was deposited inside, Helena taking the remainder to Byzantium. From thence she sent a portion to Rome by Constantine, who placed it in the church of Santa Croce Gerusalemme, built expressly for the purpose. From this time festivals were established, and pilgrimages undertaken, while fragments of the cross were sold at high prices. It was soon found that the supply was not equal to the demand, and the wily priests, to meet this exigency and account for the superabundance of the relic ("sufficient to build a fleet," say some writers), announced to the multitude that it no longer healed but self-multiplied. During the episcopate of Cyril, A.D. 350—386, this was shown and honoured as the true cross at Jerusalem. After the capture of Jerusalem by the Persians, in A.D. 614, the remains of the cross were taken by Chosroes the Second to his capital. They were, however, recovered by Heraclius in A.D. 628, and taken back to Jerusalem. This event was commemorated by the festival of the Exaltation of the Cross, held on the 14th of September, which was also called Holy Rood Day, or Holy Cross Day, according to Brand. In A.D. 637, Jerusalem was again conquered by the Saracens, and nothing has since been heard of the cross which had been left there. The piece of wood with the title inscribed, found by Helena, with traces of Hebrew and Roman letters, was sent by Constantine to Rome, and is said to be still preserved there—the story being that it was found in a leaden chest belonging to Constantine, which was attested by a bull of Pope Alexander the Third. In the thirteenth

century what remained of the portion taken by Helena to Constantinople was removed during the reign of St. Louis to Paris, and is said to be still preserved in the Sainte Chapelle. Sergius the First is said to have placed a portion of the cross in a silver box in St. Peter's Cathedral, about A.D. 690. A supposed relic of the true cross was preserved in the Tower of London as late as the reign of James the First.

Such is the history of the Invention, or discovery, of the Cross, which had once so many upholders and believers. The superstitions with which we have now to deal are connected with the species of tree of which the cross was thought to have been composed. The general belief is that it was made of the elder-tree; therefore, although fuel may be scarce and these sticks plentiful, the poor superstitious people will not burn them. In Scotland, according to a writer in *The Dublin Magazine*, it is called the *bourtrees*, and the following rhyme is indicative of their beliefs:

*Bourtrees, bourtrees, crooked rung,
Never straight and never strong,
Ever bush and never tree,
Since our Lord was nailed on thee.*

In Chambers's *Book of Days* is an instance of the belief that a person is perfectly safe under the shelter of an elder-tree during a thunderstorm, as the lightning never strikes the tree of which the cross was made. Experience has taught that this is a fallacy, although many curious exceptional instances are recorded. James Napier, in his *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England*, tells us of a peculiar custom. The elder is planted in the form of a cross upon a newly-made grave, and if it blooms they take it as a sure sign that the soul of the dead person is happy. Dyer, in his *English Folk-lore*, says that the most common belief in England is that the cross was made of the aspen (*Populus tremula*), the leaves having trembled ever since at the recollection of their guilt. Another legend is that all the trees shivered at the Crucifixion except the aspen, which has been doomed to quiver ever since. An extract from Mrs. Hemans's *Wood Walk and Hymn* is worthy of quotation here as beautifully illustrating the first idea:

FATHER. Hast thou heard, my boy,
The peasant's legend of that quivering tree?

CHILD. No, father; doth he say the fairies
dance
Amidst its branches?

FATHER. Oh! a cause more deep,
More solemn far, the rustic doth assign
To the strange restlessness of those wan leaves.

The Cross he deems, the blessed Cross, whereon
The meek Redeemer bow'd his head to death,
Was formed of aspen wood; and since that hour
Through all its race the pale tree hath sent
down

A thrilling consciousness, a secret awe
Making them tremulous, when not a breeze
Disturbs the airy thistle-down, or shakes
The light lines from the shining gossamer.

In Ulster the aspen is called "quiggen-epsy"—i.e., "quaking aspen." In support of these beliefs the aspen still flourishes near Jerusalem. In the West of England there is a tradition that the cross was formed of the mistletoe, which before that event used to be a fine forest tree, but has since been doomed to lead a parasitical existence. The gipsies believe that it was made of the ash-tree. The nails used at the Crucifixion, said to have been found by Helena, are reported to have worked many miracles. One of them was thrown by her into the Adriatic during a storm, and produced a perfect calm. Another placed in the crown or helm of Constantine was found in a mutilated state in the church of Santa Croce. The third is said to be in the possession of the Duomo of Milan, while that of Treves claims the fourth. In the time of Charlemagne a new relic was discovered in the shape of a sponge soaked in the blood of Christ. In Cheshire the *Arum maculatum* is called "Gethsemane," because it is said to have been growing at the foot of the cross, and to have received some drops of blood on its petals.

The dirpe of Mamre died at the Crucifixion! "Christ's Thorn" is a very common plant in Palestine. We must just mention one more superstition in connection with our Lord's agony, and then we must close the chapter. In Scotland it was formerly believed that the dwarf birch is stunted in growth because the rods with which Christ was scourged were made from it.

These are the popular ideas of the material of the cross, some of which will, perhaps, never be entirely obliterated until the last great day, when "all things shall be made plain."

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXIV. A PERILOUS DISCOVERY.

"I WAS not likely soon to forget this singular adventure, to which perhaps I attached an undue importance because of its connection with the statue of Evangeline; but there was another reason for remem-

brance in the parallel which suggested itself between the childless woman and Clarice. I paid a second visit to the market-place at midnight, and again met the woman, who was almost as much an outcast among the islanders as myself. She claimed me as an old-time friend, and again asked me to accompany her to the grave of her child. I humoured her, being curious to learn the particulars of her story, but she did not gratify my curiosity until we met for the third time in the same place.

"‘I asked her,’ said Bertha, pointing to the statue, ‘whether it was right for me to meet you here and talk to you; she said I could trust you. Tell me your name.’

"‘Ranf.’

"‘Mine is Bertha.’

"That night she told me her story. There was nothing new in it, so far as regarded herself. She trusted and was deceived, and the man who brought disgrace upon her was killed in open fight by her father.

"‘My mother was dead,’ said Bertha, ‘and my father turned me from his house. He had no other children; he might have been kinder to me. But he was a man who always acted rightly, so the islanders said. Then it is right never to forgive. I had friends, as I thought—girls, and men, and children. Not one of them had a heart, not one. Is it not strange to go through the world so—to kiss and embrace you, and then to thrust you away! And for a father to turn from his child! I do not understand it. Why, if my baby lived, and grew to be a woman, and did wrong unconsciously, or was unhappy in any way, in disgrace with all the world, I should take her to my bosom and comfort her, and whisper to her, “Do not grieve, my child; your mother loves you, though all the world is against you!” And we should be happy again; it would not then be always night; there would be sometimes a bright cloud in our lives.’

"I allowed her to talk without interruption, and presently she spoke again of her lover.

"‘I knew that my father was seeking him; I had been told so, not out of kindness, but out of malice. “There will be blood shed,” they said, and they looked upon me with horror, as though the crime were mine. I tried to find him and warn him. All the day and far into the night I wandered from place to place, seeking him, and at length I saw him lying dead upon

the ground. It drove me almost mad. I ran to my father’s house; I beat my hands against the door till the blood came; he opened a window above, and asked me what I wanted. “There has been murder done!” I cried. “The guilty has been punished,” my father said sternly, and he bade me go from his house and never dare to set eyes on him again, for he no longer had a daughter. I was overwhelmed, and sat down on the door-step, in the dread hope that the world was coming to an end. And all the while my baby was in my arms, sleeping peacefully, and as I looked at her sweet face in the dim light, I thought, “What does it matter? We have each other.” I took her to her father, and waking her, made her kiss him; I kissed him also, for the last time, and have never seen him since. I do not know where they have buried him; they would not tell me.’

"We were walking to the grave of her child, and she stopped and looked around with wandering eyes, seeking the shadow of the man she had loved too well.

"‘I was alone in the world,’ she said, as we walked onward again, ‘no one to speak to, except my baby; no one to love, except my baby. Every one had fallen off from me, every one; only my baby remained. Then it happened that I came in the night to the market-place, and discovered what no other person in the isle but you and I suspect—that what they call a statue lives and speaks. When she first smiled upon me it was like rain upon a parched field. My eyes had been scorched and dried up with grief; ah, what pain! what anguish! And when Evangeline smiled, the tears came and relieved my heart. She spoke to me, and comforted me, and prevented me from going mad. We are sisters, and by-and-by we shall know each other better in the spirit land, where I shall have my baby again in my arms. And my father will be there, and baby’s father, too. Will my father, when he sees me there, say, “Come to me, my daughter; all is forgiven.” What if I answered him: “Had you been merciful to me, my baby might have lived, and I should not have been condemned to wander night after night and day after day from valley to valley, from field to field, in search of a kind look or word.” Then, if there be justice, the priests will be dumb. Do you like them?’

"‘The priests?’

"‘Yes. Do you like them?’

"'I have no reason to,' I answered slowly.

"'I am glad, because you are not like the others, and you strengthen my belief. What do they mean when they say, "God is love." There should be something more than words, should there not. "God is love." Then He will know I have done no wrong, and He will take my little one to His bosom, and me, from whom she drew life. I shall wait—I shall wait—and on the judgment day I shall say to the priests, "You told me that God is love, and you tried to prove to me that He is hate." Yes, it is true. They did not pour oil into my wounds. Would you believe that they would not bury my innocent baby in consecrated ground? But a soul is a soul, and they could not rob her of that, nor me of Divine love and mercy. So I am satisfied to wait, but not too long—not too long! I must die before I grow old. Look at me; I am pretty; I don't want to grow ugly, and then die. Baby might not know me, and that would be too terrible to bear. Where do you live?'

"'On the mountain.'

"She looked at me, and retreated a few steps, impelled by some instinct of repugnance; but she came quickly to my side again, and took my hand.

"'And your name is Ranf, you told me. I did not think at the time. You are the being I have heard of and was warned against, and never saw till the other night. That proves what men are. Let me whisper to you: there are people here who abhor you, and yet you are the only one who has given me a kind word since my baby died.' She kissed my hand passionately. 'And you live on the mountain—Evangeline's mountain. She lies, too, in ground that has not been consecrated. I shall come and see you on the mountain.'

"'You will be the first who has dared.'

"'Oh, I shall dare!'

"'Best to keep away,' I said; 'I prefer to live alone.'

"'The mountain is free; I shall come; I am not frightened. Evangeline is there, and her heavenly messengers!'

"I repeated, in wonder, 'Her heavenly messengers!'

"'The pretty birds that fly to and fro. I have watched them, and hope one day they will bring me a message from Heaven or Evangeline. You see, I know you do not live alone. Have you not goats and dogs?'

"'Yes.'

"'It must be a fine life. I shall come and see you.'

"I left her that night, as on the other nights, whispering to the wild flowers which grow on her child's grave, and kissing the cold earth which mercifully hides what is dearest to her in this world and the next.

"Her piteous story drew me to her, and from that night we were friends. A fancy of mine impelled me to place some roots of the dream-flower on the grave of her child, and when I told her the name of the flower she thanked me earnestly, and said that Heaven had directed me to bring the sweet comfort to her soul.

"What is most beautiful in her is her devotion to her dead baby. As the leaf loves the light so does she love her child.

"Her father lives now a life of seclusion, pitied and not condemned by his comrades. And yet he has broken a holy commandment. It is hard to thread one's way through these labyrinths—not for me, for others; my mind is no longer in a state of doubt upon other than mortal matters. The woman who most needs pity receives none; she is shunned and avoided by all. Hard as granite are the islanders in their notions of morality.

"I have already set down here how, when I slipped over the precipice and almost met my death, I was saved by the branch of a tree which grew out of the rocks, and how, by this means, I discovered a path which led me to a place of safety, from whence I crawled to my hut and nursed my wounds. I determined then, when I was strong, to convince myself whether this path was made by Nature or man. If by man, but one being could have formed it—the Cain of the Silver Isle, who in a paroxysm of jealous love treacherously killed his brother.

"Anxious to make myself acquainted with every detail of the tragedy that at this distance of time could be gathered together, I enlisted Joseph Sylvester, who was most industrious in collecting all the hearsay connected with the subject. Such a story, transmitted from generation to generation, of course becomes twisted and dotted with fantastic features; but the main points remain, and can be eliminated from the fanciful creations, and these I have taken and pieced with clearness and consistency. I cannot well explain my motive, except that the tragedy appeared to be directly connected with the task I had set myself. Joseph naturally took

great interest in the story, partly for its own sake as a wild and gloomy episode in human life, but chiefly because the girl's name was Evangeline. This was sufficient to enchain his imagination, and it has also captivated the imagination of our own Evangeline, from whom Joseph hides nothing. She tells me that she sometimes dreams of her namesake. I have endeavoured, without success, to make light of the subject in my conversations with Evangeline; I did not wish her to dwell morbidly upon it; but I cannot wonder that she should often speak of it when my own mind is so continually dwelling upon the theme.

"Other matters, after I got well, preventing the immediate execution of my purpose, it was quite three months before I was enabled to apply myself seriously to my task. I felt that it was likely to prove a difficult one, and I wished to have a clear time before me. Some parts of this mountain are subject to land-slips, and although I am not aware of an avalanche of any magnitude occurring, I have had myself to guard against convulsions, slight in themselves, but sufficient to prove fatal to life.

"One morning I set forth from my hut, accompanied by my dog Leontine. I strapped a blanket round my shoulders in case I should be benighted, and I provided myself with food, and a gourd for water. A light axe, a pick, and a short-handled shovel, completed my equipments.

"It was not without difficulty that I found the narrow path which led to the outer surface of the rocks. When I first discovered it I was in pain and great excitement, and my only aim was to reach my hut in safety. I paid then no attention to its conformation, and even the circumstance that for some distance it had been tunnelled had escaped my memory, perhaps even my notice. Since I last passed through the tunnel a quantity of loose earth had fallen; this I cleared away, and in the course of the afternoon, after much labour, I emerged from the tunnel into open daylight. From the mouth of the tunnel the path stretched onwards for about twenty yards, and there terminated—of necessity, for the sheer surface of the rock was reached. I recognised the tree whose stout branches had preserved me from being cut to pieces on the jutting stones, and tired with my exertions, I sat down, with my face to the sea, and partook of the food I had brought, Leontine sharing with

me. The meal being over, I lay full length on a flat surface of rock, and with my hand round Leontine's neck, uttered my thoughts aloud. The dog listened to me with an appearance of sagacity, and at the same time with a watchful eye for my safety. I had chosen a perilous resting-place; an enemy creeping up behind me might with a light push have sent me rolling to the bottom of the cliffs; but no enemy was near, and my hand was steady, my eye true, and my mind clear. I could not help smiling at the thought of what might occur, were Harold, Maurvain, and I imprisoned on this spot, with old grudges to satisfy, and holding each other in bitter contempt.

"It would be a rare test of courage," I said aloud. 'If something most precious depended upon life or death, how then, Leontine? There is truth in wine, they say. So when a man's soul is racked and tempest-tossed, his true nature is revealed. The many rave and threaten; the few endure, and smile at fate.'

"Autumn flowers grew everywhere around me; various-coloured grasses waved in the breath of light breezes; insects with gossamer wings threw fairy shadows over the velvet moss which carpeted the trunk of the ancient tree. Nature is bounteous in her gifts, and clothes the loneliest spots with beauty.

"Impossible to say," I said to my dog, when, after a contemplation of these eternal miracles my thoughts returned to my project, 'impossible to say at this distance of time whether the road we have traversed was formed by Nature or man. If by man, there must have been a purpose in view. What purpose, Leontine, and did his work end here? It is scarcely probable it was undertaken to arrive at this barren result. Certainly there is from this point a very fine prospect, and one can enjoy it without fear of observation on the part of the islanders; but that is not a great advantage, for the prospect is equally fine from the top of the mountain, and one is not likely to be disturbed by the intrusion of his kind. What discovery might one make in this lonely spot, more secluded even than our mountain huts? I might split open an ancient rock and release a toad, who would not thank me for bringing it into the light; or a spirit might guide us by a safe road to the mysterious depth in which Evangeline and her bridegroom found their grave. Such is life, Leontine;

one day smiling and happy, the next imbedded in a grief which time alone can kill. Your eyes are fixed on that beetle whose burnished scales reflect gorgeous colours of green and gold and purple. A handsome fellow, Leontine, beyond the painter's art. How lovely is the sea, with the sunlight playing on it. An ocean of living jewels! It stretches to shores I have trodden in pain and weariness. A bitter world lies beyond these seas; but for the matter of that there is bitterness enough within this girdle. There is a taint in our blood, my dog; we fret and faint with desire; we lay our heavy hand upon the weak, and hold them down while they suffer. It proves our own righteousness, Leontine. What have you found, dumb friend? A treasure?

"Leontine was busy scratching the earth from a spot nearer even to the edge of the precipice than the rock on which I lay, and presently she came to my side, and in a way, I understood, besought my assistance. I shifted to the spot which had interested her, and saw that she had scratched the earth away from what looked like a piece of rusty iron. At first I regarded it with no interest, but suddenly it flashed upon me that if it was iron which Leontine had partly laid bare it was an evidence of man's work. The moment this occurred to me I started to my feet and dug my pick into the rock to complete the discovery; the consequence was that I almost lost my balance, there was so little room to swing the arm with freedom. The danger escaped, I proceeded with greater caution, and loosening the rock and earth around and above the metal, saw that it was part of a chain which must have lain buried for many scores of years. My journey was not destined to be fruitless; man had been here before me.

"My interest being now thoroughly awakened, I went to work with a will. Link by link I forced from the rock a chain at least sixty feet in length, and coming to the last link found that it was fixed to an iron ring which was firmly imbedded in the rock. With all my strength I strove to detach the ring, but could not move it so

well had the work been done. When I was convinced that I could not remove the ring from the rock, I blamed myself for my folly in attempting it. Had I succeeded I should have placed a difficulty in my own way; for was it not likely that this chain was an important step in the discovery of a secret which had been hidden from human knowledge for generations?

"It had been no light task to fix it so firmly in the rock; it was a serious work, seriously performed, with a distinct and definite motive. Of what nature was this motive?

"As I considered, playing with the coils of the chain with my foot, it slipped over the rock with a startling crash, and hung sheer down. Quickly I tested whether it would bear the weight of a man. There was no doubt of it. It would bear the weight of two such men as I. Without further thought I grasped it firmly, and commenced to descend. That there was danger in what I was doing did not occur to me; I was, indeed, animated by a spirit of exhilaration. I remember now, and shall remember to the last day of my life, the expression in Leontine's face as I looked up and saw her peering down upon me. The expression was almost human in its intense sympathy with my exploit, and as I descended, looking upwards at my dog, with the sky flying from me into illimitable heights, I exulted in the thought that there was one creature in the world who would be faithful to me to the death. I had but to call 'Leontine!' and she would leap into the void without fear at the sound of my voice. She would meet her certain death. Well, a faithful death ranks next to a faithful life. And man and beast can die but once. It is but a question of a little time; the day will be sure to come when there will be no to-morrow."

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXX. "LOVE MAY BE A GREAT MISFORTUNE."

SILVERBRIDGE when he reached Brook Street that day was surprised to find that a large party was going to lunch there. Isabel had asked him to come, and he had thought her the dearest girl in the world for doing so. But now his gratitude for that favour was considerably abated. He did not care just now for the honour of eating his lunch in the presence of Mr. Gotobed, the American minister, whom he found there already in the drawing-room with Mrs. Gotobed, nor with Ezekiel Sevenkings, the great American poet from the far West, who sat silent and stared at him in an unpleasant way. When Sir Timothy Beeswax was announced, with Lady Beeswax, and her daughter, his gratification certainly was not increased. And the last comer—who did not arrive indeed till they were all seated at table—almost made him start from his chair and take his departure suddenly. That last comer was no other than Mr. Adolphus Longstaff. As it happened he was seated next to Dolly, with Lady Beeswax on the other side of him. Whereas his holy of holies was on the other side of Dolly. The arrangement made seemed to him to have been monstrous. He had endeavoured to get next to Isabel; but she had so manœuvred that there should be a vacant chair between them. He had not much regarded this because a vacant chair may be pushed on one side. But before he had made all his calculations Dolly Longstaff was sitting there! He almost thought

that Dolly winked at him in triumph—that very Dolly who an hour ago had promised to take himself off upon his Asiatic travels!

Sir Timothy and the minister kept up the conversation very much between them, Sir Timothy flattering everything that was American, and the minister finding fault with very many things that were English. Now and then Mr. Boncassen would put in a word to soften the severe honesty of his countryman, or to correct the euphemistic falsehoods of Sir Timothy. The poet seemed always to be biding his time. Dolly ventured to whisper a word to his neighbour. It was but to say that the frost had broken up. But Silverbridge heard it and looked daggers at everyone. Then Lady Beeswax expressed to him a hope that he was going to do great things in Parliament this session. "I don't mean to go near the place," he said, not at all conveying any purpose to which he had really come, but driven by the stress of the moment to say something that should express his general hatred of everybody. Mr. Lupton was there, on the other side of Isabel, and was soon engaged with her in a pleasant familiar conversation. Then Silverbridge remembered that he had always thought Lupton to be a most conceited prig. Nobody gave himself so many airs, or was so careful as to the dyeing of his whiskers. It was astonishing that Isabel should allow herself to be amused by such an antiquated coxcomb. When they had finished eating they moved about and changed their places, Mr. Boncassen being rather anxious to stop the flood of American eloquence which came from his friend Mr. Gotobed. British viands had become subject to his criticism, and Mr.

Gotobed had declared to Mr. Lupton that he didn't believe that London could produce a dish of squash or tomatoes. He was quite sure you couldn't have sweet corn. Then there had been a moving of seats, in which the minister was shuffled off to Lady Beeswax, and the poet foud himself by the side of Isabel. "Do you not regret our mountains and our prairies," said the poet; "our great waters and our green savannahs!" "I think more perhaps of Fifth Avenue," said Miss Boncassen. Silverbridge, who at this moment was being interrogated by Sir Timothy, heard every word of it.

"I was so sorry, Lord Silverbridge," said Sir Timothy, "that you could not accede to our little request."

"I did not quite see my way," said Silverbridge, with his eye upon Isabel.

"So I understood, but I hope that things will make themselves clearer to you shortly. There is nothing that I desire so much as the support of young men such as yourself—the very cream, I may say, of the whole country. It is to the young conservative thoughtfulness, and the truly British spirit of our springing aristocracy, that I look for that reaction, which, I am sure, will at last carry us safely over the rocks and shoals of communistic propensities."

"I shouldn't wonder if it did," said Silverbridge. They didn't think that he was going to remain down there talking politics to an old humbug like Sir Timothy when the sun, and moon, and all the stars had gone up into the drawing-room! For at that moment Isabel was making her way to the door.

But Sir Timothy had buttonholed him. "Of course it is late now to say anything further about the address. We have arranged that. Not quite as I would have wished, for I had set my heart upon initiating you into the rapturous pleasure of parliamentary debate. But I hope that a good time is coming. And pray remember this, Lord Silverbridge—there is no member sitting on our side of the House, and I need hardly say on the other, whom I would go farther to oblige than your father's son."

"I'm sure that's very kind," said Silverbridge, absolutely using a little force as he disengaged himself. Then he at once followed the ladies upstairs, passing the poet on the stairs. "You have hardly spoken to me," he whispered to Isabel. He knew that to whisper to her now, with the eyes of many upon him, with the ears of many open, was an absurdity; but he could not refrain himself.

"There are so many to be—entertained, as people say! I don't think I ought to have to entertain you," she answered, laughing. No one heard her but Silverbridge, and yet she did not seem to whisper. She left him, however, at once, and was soon engaged in conversation with Sir Timothy.

A convivial lunch I hold to be altogether bad, but the worse of its many evils is that vacillating mind which does not know when to take its owner off. Silverbridge was on this occasion quite determined not to take himself off at all. As it was only a lunch the people must go, and then he would be left with Isabel. But the vacillation of the others was distressing to him. Mr. Lupton went, and poor Dolly got away apparently without a word. But the Beeswaxes and the Gotobeds would not go, and the poet sat staring immovably. In the meanwhile Silverbridge endeavoured to make the time pass lightly by talking to Mrs. Boncassen. He had been so determined to accept Isabel with all her adjuncts that he had come almost to like Mrs. Boncassen, and would certainly have taken her part violently had anyone spoken ill of her in his presence.

Then suddenly he found that the room was nearly empty. The Beeswaxes and the Gotobeds were gone; and at last the poet himself, with a final glare of admiration at Isabel, had taken his departure. When Silverbridge looked round, Isabel also was gone. Then too Mrs. Boncassen had left the room suddenly. At the same instant Mr. Boncassen entered by another door, and the two men were alone together. "My dear Lord Silverbridge," said the father, "I want to have a few words with you." Of course there was nothing for him but to submit. "You remember what you said to me down at Matching?"

"Oh, yes; I remember that."

"You did me the great honour of expressing a wish to make my child your wife."

"I was asking for a very great favour."

"That also—for there is no greater favour that I could do to any man than to give him my daughter. Nevertheless, you were doing me a great honour—and you did it, as you do everything, with an honest grace that went far to win my heart. I am not at all surprised, sir, that you should have won hers." The young man as he heard this could only blush and look foolish. "If I know my girl, neither your money nor your title would go for anything."

"I think much more of her love, Mr. Boncassen, than I do of anything else in the world."

"But love, my lord, may be a great misfortune." As he said this the tone of his voice was altered, and there was a melancholy solemnity not only in his words but in his countenance. "I take it that young people when they love rarely think of more than the present moment. If they did so the bloom would be gone from their romance. But others have to do this for them. If Isabel had come to me saying that she loved a poor man, there would not have been much to disquiet me. A poor man may earn bread for himself and his wife, and if he failed I could have found them bread. Nor, had she loved somewhat below her own degree, should I have opposed her. So long as her husband had been an educated man, there might have been no future punishment to fear."

"I don't think she could have done that," said Silverbridge.

"At any rate she had not done so. But how am I to look upon this that she has done?"

"I'll do my best for her, Mr. Boncassen."

"I believe you would. But even your love can't make her an Englishwoman. You can make her a duchess."

"Not that, sir."

"But you can't give her a parentage fit for a duchess—not fit at least in the opinion of those with whom you will pass your life, with whom—or perhaps without whom—she will be destined to pass her life, if she becomes your wife! Unfortunately it does not suffice that you should think it fit. Though you loved each other as well as any man and woman that ever were brought into each other's arms by the beneficence of God, you cannot make her happy—unless you can ensure her the respect of those around her."

"All the world will respect her."

"Her conduct—yes. I think the world, your world, would learn to do that. I do not think it could help itself. But that would not suffice, I may respect the man who cleans my boots. But he would be a wretched man if he were thrown on me for society. I would not give him my society. Will your duchesses and your countesses give her theirs?"

"Certainly they will."

"I do not ask for it as thinking it to be of more value than that of others; but were she to become your wife she would be so abnormally placed as to require it for her comfort. She would have become a lady

of high rank—not because she loves rank, but because she loves you."

"Yes, yes, yes," said Silverbridge, hardly himself knowing why he became impetuous.

"But having removed herself into that position, being as she would be, a countess, or a duchess, or what not, how could she be happy if she were excluded from the community of countesses and duchesses?"

"They are not like that," said Silverbridge.

"I will not say that they are, but I do not know. Having Anglican tendencies, I have been wont to contradict my countrymen when they have told me of the narrow exclusiveness of your nobles. Having found your nobles and your commoners all alike in their courtesy—which is a cold word; in their hospitable friendships—I would now not only contradict, but would laugh to scorn any such charge"—so far he spoke somewhat loudly, and then dropped his voice as he concluded—"were it anything less than the happiness of my child that is in question."

"What am I to say, sir? I only know this; I am not going to lose her."

"You are a fine fellow. I was going to say that I wish you were an American, so that Isabel need not lose you. But, my boy, I have told you that I do not know how it might be. Of all whom you know, who could best tell me the truth on such a subject? Who is there whose age will have given him experience, whose rank will have made him familiar with this matter, who from friendship to you would be least likely to decide against your wishes, who from his own native honesty would be most sure to tell the truth?"

"You mean my father," said Silverbridge.

"I do mean your father. Happily he has taken no dislike to the girl herself. I have seen enough of him to feel sure that he is devoted to his own children."

"Indeed he is."

"A just and a liberal man; one I should say not carried away by prejudices! Well, my girl and I have just put our heads together, and we have come to a conclusion. If the Duke of Omnium will tell us that she would be safe as your wife—safe from the contempt of those around her—you shall have her. And I shall rejoice to give her to you, not because you are Lord Silverbridge, not because of your rank and wealth; but because you are—that individual human being whom I now hold by the hand."

When the American had come to an end Silverbridge was too much moved to make any immediate answer. He had an idea in his own mind that the appeal was not altogether fair. His father was a just man—just, affectionate, and liberal. But then it will so often happen that fathers do not want their sons to marry those very girls on whom the sons have set their hearts. He could only say that he would speak to his father again on the subject. "Let him tell me that he is contented," said Mr. Boncassen, "and I will tell him I am contented. Now, my friend, good-bye." Silverbridge begged that he might be allowed to see Isabel before he was turned out; but Isabel had left the house in company with her mother.

CHAPTER LXXI. "WHAT AM I TO SAY, SIR?"

WHEN Silverbridge left Mr. Boncassen's house he was resolved to go to his father without an hour's delay, and represent to the duke exactly how the case stood. He would be urgent, piteous, submissive, and eloquent. In any other matter he would promise to make whatever arrangements his father might desire. He would make his father understand that all his happiness depended on this marriage. When once married he would settle down, even at Gatherum Castle if the duke should wish it. He would not think of race-horses, he would desert the Beargarden, he would learn blue-books by heart, and only do as much shooting and hunting as would become a young nobleman in his position. All this he would say as eagerly and as pleasantly as it might be said. But he would add to all this an assurance of his unchangeable intention. It was his purpose to marry Isabel Boncassen. If he could do this with his father's good will—so best. But at any rate he would marry her.

The world at this time was altogether busy with political rumours; and it was supposed that Sir Timothy Beeswax would do something very clever. It was supposed also that he would sever himself from some of his present companions. On that point everybody was agreed—and on that point only everybody was right. Lord Drummond, who was the titular Prime Minister, and Sir Timothy, had, during a considerable part of the last session, and through the whole vacation, so belarded each other with praise in all their public expressions that it was quite manifest that they had quarrelled. When any body of statesmen

make public asseverations by one or various voices, that there is no discord among them, not a dissentient voice on any subject, people are apt to suppose that they cannot hang together much longer. It is the man who has no peace at home who declares abroad that his wife is an angel. He who lives on comfortable terms with the partner of his troubles can afford to acknowledge the ordinary rubs of life. Old Mr. Mildmay, who was Prime Minister for so many years, and whom his party worshipped, used to say that he had never found a gentleman who quite agreed with him all round; but Sir Timothy has always been in exact accord with all his colleagues—till he has left them, or they him. Never had there been such concord as of late—and men, clubs, and newspapers now protested that as a natural consequence there would soon be a break-up.

But not on that account would it perhaps be necessary that Sir Timothy should resign, or not necessary that his resignation should be permanent. The conservative majority had dwindled—but still there was a majority. It certainly was the case that Lord Drummond could not get on without Sir Timothy. But might it not be possible that Sir Timothy should get on without Lord Drummond? If so he must begin his action in this direction by resigning. He would have to place his resignation, no doubt with infinite regret, in the hands of Lord Drummond. But if such a step were to be taken now, just as Parliament was about to assemble, what would become of the Queen's speech, of the address, and of the noble peers and noble and other commoners who were to propose and second it in the two Houses of Parliament? There were those who said that such a trick played at the last moment would be very shabby. But then again there were those who foresaw that the shabbiness would be made to rest anywhere rather than on the shoulders of Sir Timothy. If it should turn out that he had striven manfully to make things run smoothly—that the Premier's incompetence, or the Chancellor's obstinacy, or this or that Secretary's peculiarity of temper had done it all—might not Sir Timothy then be able to emerge from the confused flood, and swim along pleasantly with his head higher than ever above the waters?

In these great matters parliamentary management goes for so much! If a man be really clever and handy at his trade, if he can work hard and knows what he is

about, if he can give and take and be not thin-skinned, if he can ask pardon for a peccadillo and seem to be sorry with a good grace, if above all things he be able to surround himself with the prestige of success, then so much will be forgiven him! Great gifts of eloquence are hardly wanted, or a deep-seated patriotism which is capable of strong indignation. A party has to be managed, and he who can manage it best, will probably be its best leader. The subordinate task of legislation and of executive government may well fall into the inferior hands of less astute practitioners. It was admitted on both sides that there was no man like Sir Timothy for managing the House or coercing a party, and there was therefore a general feeling that it would be a pity that Sir Timothy should be squeezed out. He knew all the little secrets of the business—could arrange, let the cause be what it might, to get a full House for himself and his friends, and empty benches for his opponents—could foresee a thousand little things to which even a Walpole would have been blind, which a Pitt would not have condescended to regard, but with which his familiarity made him a very comfortable leader of the House of Commons. There were various ideas prevalent as to the politics of the coming session; but the prevailing idea was in favour of Sir Timothy.

The duke was at Longroyston, the seat of his old political ally the Duke of St. Bungay, and had been absent from Sunday the 6th till the morning of Friday the 11th, on which day Parliament was to meet. On that morning at about noon a letter came to the son saying that his father had returned, and would be glad to see him. Silverbridge was going to the House on that day, and was not without his own political anxieties. If Lord Drummond remained in, he thought that he must, for the present, stand by the party which he had adopted. If, however, Sir Timothy should become Prime Minister there would be a loophole for escape. There were some three or four besides himself who detested Sir Timothy, and in such case he might perhaps have company in his desertion. All this was on his mind; but through all this he was aware that there was a matter of much deeper moment which required his energies. When his father's message was brought to him he told himself at once that now was the time for his eloquence.

"Well, Silverbridge," said the duke,

"how are matters going on with you!" There seemed to be something in his father's manner more than ordinarily jocund and good-humoured.

"With me, sir?"

"I don't mean to ask any party secrets. If you and Sir Timothy understand each other, of course you will be discreet."

"I can't be discreet, sir, because I don't know anything about him."

"When I heard," said the duke, smiling, "of your being in close conference with Sir Timothy——"

"I, sir?"

"Yes, you. Mr. Boncassen told me that you and he were so deeply taken up with each other at his house, that nobody could get a word with either of you."

"Have you seen Mr. Boncassen?" asked the son, whose attention was immediately diverted from his father's political badinage.

"Yes; I have seen him. I happened to meet him where I was dining last Sunday, and he walked home with me. He was so intent upon what he was saying that I fear he allowed me to take him out of his way."

"What was he talking about?" asked Silverbridge. All his preparations, all his eloquence, all his method, now seemed to have departed from him.

"He was talking about you," said the duke.

"He had told me that he wanted to see you. What did he say, sir?"

"I suppose you can guess what he said. He wished to know what I thought of the offer you have made to his daughter." The great subject had come up so easily, so readily, that he was almost aghast when he found himself in the middle of it. And yet he must speak of the matter, and that at once.

"I hope you raised no objection, sir," he said.

"The objection came mainly from him; and I am bound to say that every word that fell from him was spoken with wisdom."

"But still he asked you to consent."

"By no means. He told me his opinion—and then he asked me a question."

"I am sure he did not say that we ought not to be married."

"He did say that he thought you ought not to be married, if——"

"If what, sir?"

"If there were probability that his daughter would not be well received as your wife. Then he asked me what would be my reception of her." Silverbridge looked up into his father's face with

beseeching, imploring eyes, as though every thing now depended on the few next words that he might utter. "I shall think it an unwise marriage," continued the duke. Silverbridge when he heard this at once knew that he had gained his cause. His father had spoken of the marriage as a thing that was to happen. A joyous light dawned in his eyes, and the look of pain went from his brow—all which the duke was not slow to perceive. "I shall think it an unwise marriage," he continued, repeating his words; "but I was bound to tell him that were Miss Boncassen to become your wife she would also become my daughter."

"Oh, sir."

"I told him why the marriage would be distasteful to me. Whether I may be wrong or right I think it to be for the good of our country, for the good of our order, for the good of our individual families, that we should support each other by marriage. It is not as though we were a narrow class, already too closely bound together by family alliances. The room for choice might be wide enough for you, without going across the Atlantic to look for her who is to be the mother of your children. To this Mr. Boncassen replied that he was to look solely to his daughter's happiness. He meant me to understand that he cared nothing for my feelings. Why should he? That which to me is deep wisdom is to him an empty prejudice. He asked me then how others would receive her."

"I am sure that everybody would like her," said Silverbridge.

"I like her. I like her very much."

"I am so glad."

"But still all this is a sorrow to me. When however he put that question to me about the world around her—as to those among whom her lot would be cast, I could not say that I thought she would be rejected."

"Oh, no!" The idea of rejecting Isabel!

"She has a brightness and a grace all her own," continued the duke, "which will ensure her acceptance in all societies."

"Yes, yes—it is just that, sir."

"You will be a nine days' wonder—the foolish young nobleman who chose to marry an American."

"I think it will be just the other way up, sir—among the men."

"But her place will I think be secure to her. That is what I told Mr. Boncassen."

"It is all right with him then—now?"

"If you call it all right. You will understand of course that you are acting in opposition to my advice—and my wishes."

"What am I to say, sir?" exclaimed Silverbridge, almost in despair. "When I love the girl better than my life, and when you tell me that she can be mine if I chose to take her; when I have asked her to be my wife, and have got her to say that she likes me; when her father has given way, and all the rest of it, would it be possible that I should say now that I will give her up?"

"My opinion is to go for nothing—in anything!" The duke as he said this knew that he was expressing aloud a feeling which should have been restrained within his own bosom. It was natural that there should have been such complaints. The same suffering must be encountered in regard to Tregear and his daughter. In every way he had been thwarted. In every direction he was driven to yield. And yet now he had to undergo rebuke from his own son, because one of those inward complaints would force itself from his lips! Of course this girl was to be taken in among the Pallisers and treated with an idolatrous love—as perfect as though "all the blood of all the Howards" were running in her veins. What further inch of ground was there for a fight? And if the fight were over, why should he rob his boy of one sparkle from off the joy of his triumph? Silverbridge was now standing before him abashed by that plaint, inwardly sustained no doubt by the conviction of his great success, but subdued by his father's wailing. "However, perhaps we had better let this pass," said the duke, with a long sigh. Then Silverbridge took his father's hand and looked up in his face. "I most sincerely hope that she may make you a good and loving wife," said the duke, "and that she may do her duty by you in that not easy sphere of life to which she will be called."

"I am quite sure she will," said Silverbridge, whose ideas as to Isabel's duties were confined at present to a feeling that she would now have to give him kisses without stint.

"What I have seen of her personally recommends her to me," said the duke.

"Some girls are fools——"

"That's quite true, sir."

"Who think that the world is to be nothing but dancing, and going to parties."

"Many have been doing it for so many

years," said Silverbridge, "that they can't understand that there should be an end of it."

"A wife ought to feel the great responsibility of her position. I hope she will."

"And the sooner she begins the better," said Silverbridge stoutly.

"And now," said the duke, looking at his watch, "we might as well have lunch and go down to the House. I will walk with you if you please. It will be about time for each of us." Then the son was forced to go down and witness the somewhat faded ceremony of seeing Parliament opened by three lords sitting in commission before the throne. Whereas but for such stress as his father had laid upon him, he would have disregarded his parliamentary duties and have rushed at once up to Brook Street. As it was he was so handed over from one political pundit to another, was so button-holed by Sir Timothy, so chaffed as to the address by Phineas Finn, and at last so occupied with the whole matter, that he was compelled to sit in his place till he had heard Nidderdale make his speech. This the young Scotch Lord did so well, and received so much praise for the doing of it, and looked so well in his uniform, that Silverbridge almost regretted the opportunity he had lost. At seven the sitting was over, the speeches, though full of interest, having been shorter than usual. They had been full of interest, but nobody understood in the least what was going to happen. "I don't know anything about the Prime Minister," said Mr. Lupton as he left the House with our hero and another not very staunch supporter of the Government, "but I'll back Sir Timothy to be the Leader of the House on the last day of the session—against all comers. I don't think it much matters who is Prime Minister nowadays."

At half-past seven Silverbridge was at the door in Brook Street. Yes; Miss Boncassen was at home. The servant thought that she was upstairs, dressing. Then Silverbridge made his way without further invitation into the drawing-room. There he remained alone for ten minutes. At last the door opened, and Mrs. Boncassen entered. "Dear, Lord Silverbridge, who ever dreamed of seeing you? I thought all you Parliament gentlemen were going through your ceremonies. Isabel had a ticket and went down, and saw your father."

"Where is Isabel?"

"She's gone."

"Gone! Where on earth has she gone to?" asked Silverbridge, as though fearing lest she had been already carried off to the other side of the Atlantic. Then Mrs. Boncassen explained. Within the last three minutes Mrs. Montacute Jones had called and carried Isabel off to the play. Mrs. Jones was up in town for a week, and this had been a very old engagement. "I hope you did not want her very particularly," said Mrs. Boncassen.

"But I did—most particularly," said Lord Silverbridge. The door was opened and Mr. Boncassen entered the room. "I beg your pardon for coming at such a time," said the lover, "but I did so want to see Isabel."

"I rather think she wants to see you," said the father.

"I shall go to the theatre after her."

"That might be awkward, particularly as I doubt whether anybody knows what theatre they are gone to. Can I receive a message for her, my lord?" This was certainly not what Lord Silverbridge had intended. "You know, perhaps, that I have seen the duke."

"Oh, yes; and I have seen him. Everything is settled."

"That is the only message she will want to hear when she comes home. She is a happy girl, and I am proud to think that I should live to call such a grand young Briton as you my son-in-law." Then the American took the young man's two hands and shook them cordially, while Mrs. Boncassen, bursting into tears, insisted on kissing him.

"Indeed she is a happy girl," said she; "but I hope Isabel won't be carried away too high and mighty."

THAT DOG.

THE most striking thing about him was his amiability of expression. I had never seen anything to equal it before in an animal, except perhaps in the case of a fine young tiger at a menagerie, whose reception of the "tamer" who entered his den was so overwhelmingly enthusiastic as almost to be dangerous. In both cases the eyes wore a bland "taking" smile, and the corners of the mouth fairly ran over with affection.

He was sitting just inside my gate; a long stubby dog, with a head much too big for his body. His head was remarkably handsome—it might have belonged to

a small bloodhound—but his body was long, his legs were short, his tail was stumpy. His head was really beautiful, but the rest of him was common, quite common.

He remained at my gate for more than two hours, looking up to me, whenever I came to the window, with a respectful affection that was extremely touching. It was evident that if his body was rough and vulgar it yet contained an amiable and good heart. In the end, a small boy stopped before that dog, and commanded him to rise and follow. The animal placidly refused, whereupon the small boy tied a short bit of string round his neck, and dragged him off, his fine head turning back to me with a regretful smile to the last. Poor creature! it was too plainly his misfortune to live amongst people unable to appreciate the placid kindness of his disposition.

The next day he was there again, and the next, and the next after that. I got used to him, so that it was with quite a little shock that, coming down to breakfast one morning, I saw his accustomed place vacant.

The same day a humble "move" passed up the street, a small cart piled with common furniture, but, noticeable feature, having, tied to the tailboard, that dog. He did not seem happy. He protested against the family removal with all his big flat feet, raising a cloud of dust, through which I beheld his expressive countenance beaming with amiable sentiments towards me. There was also in his demeanour a kind of indescribable assurance that he only succumbed for the moment to the tyranny of circumstances, that, in fact, he would yet return to claim that sympathetic recognition of his amiable qualities which was all his faithful heart required.

So sure did I feel of his return that I hastened next morning to the window. He was not there; but my attention was presently attracted by faint deprecatory thumps upon the hearthrug, caused by the thick, stumpy tail of that dog.

How would he be received? Fortunately for him the mistress of the house entered with one of the children.

"Oh, mamma, there is the dog that goes out for walks with us!"

This last evidence of devotion encouraged me to plead his cause. I grew quite eloquent as I expatiated upon the true heart that so frequently beats beneath the uncouth exterior. I pointed out that bur-

glaries had been frequent in the neighbourhood. I won everyone to believe that a small dog was indispensable to the security of the house.

"But what will pussy say?" queried a little girl, whose remarks, though not frequent, were mostly to the point.

A pause ensued. We had forgotten the claims of our noble and esteemed cat. It was agreed that unless pussy got on well with the new comer he must go.

At this moment pussy, who was rather a late riser, entered. She walked soberly round the table, and then, at sight of the intruder, paused, with demonstrations of hostility. That dog responded with a humility that was almost abject. He slobbered with respectful appreciation of the superiority of pussy. His very tail ceased to beat the hearthrug, and his whole body became actually cataleptic with an earnest desire to ingratiate.

The behaviour of our noble and intelligent cat was, upon this, distressingly feline. Taking advantage of the poor dog's quiescence, she approached to within a suitable distance, and then, stretching out one long fore-paw, drew five sharp claws from one end to the other of his long meek nose. He bore it with an admirable stoicism. One sharp short howl escaped him, but he did not move a limb.

Pussy retired to about the distance of five feet, and sat down, plainly astonished, but not indisposed to set it all down to the incontestable superiority of her general appearance and character. That dog seemed to recognise the effect he had produced, and redoubled his endeavours to be humbly and submissively agreeable. He sat motionless for two hours, except when, at rare intervals, pussy slowly turned her head, and contemplated him with supercilious curiosity, not altogether unmixed with a secret amazement. Then his expressive face broadened with a wider smile, and his tail beat a humble tattoo upon the carpet. At length pussy coiled herself up before the fire, and that dog, relaxing his wearied facial muscles, lay down at a respectful, a well-chosen, but not a remote distance from her. It was unanimously agreed that he had stood the ordeal to perfection.

About midday both animals departed together in search of dinner. Anxious to see that the poor submissive dog got some, I posted myself at a window which commanded the back premises. The plate of scraps was brought out and placed upon the ground. That dog at once had his

nose in it. The cat followed with well-bred, or rather perhaps well-fed, indifference. She evidently expected, as did I, that the dog would give place to her—would even retire to a respectful distance until she was satisfied. To our astonishment he remained at the plate.

With a precision that was imperturbably accidental he interposed his thickset body between pussy and the dinner. She tried at another point. With his nose and munching jaws, as it were, as a pivot, he revolved his interposing body. Three times did poor pussy circumnavigate the plate, always met by the aggravatingly accidental hindquarters of that dog. It was too much. His harsh, wiry coat brushed her delicate fur, his bristly tail whiffed her fastidious nose. Encouraged no doubt by her experience of the morning, she rose upon her hind legs, and with a high and even elegant swoop planted her claws in the lower part of his back. The effect was electrical. In a second poor pussy was rolling over and over in the dust, the victim of a fierce, vicious worry. Her former triumph was amply revenged. Never had the poor, fat, placid, self-contented animal been so treated. Fur flew from her back as she escaped up the wash-house wall.

This was a somewhat rude shock to our confidence in the amiability of our acquisition. Still it would not do to have too quiet a dog, because of the burglars. We were disposed to be indulgent to the poor animal. Nor was this feeling weakened by the discovery that no amount of coaxing could induce that dog to resume his walks with the children. It was evident that there was a vein of time-serving hypocrisy in his disposition; but this kind of thing seldom seriously annoys the objects of it. The creature took his place in the household. He was addicted to secret rambles, presumably in thorny places, for his long ears were seldom free from laceration; but he exhibited a ferocity with regard to beggars, and a discrimination with regard to the postman, which showed him to be a dog of no common order.

He had been with us about a month when a young friend, of sporting predilections, called, accompanied by a well-bred white bull-terrier. We were standing at the window admiring the points of the terrier, when Rough, as we had named our own dog, entered with a large bone in his mouth.

"What an awful brute!" said our friend; "not yours, of course?"

"Well, he came to us; an excellent house-dog, you've no idea, and a more harmless creature never lived."

"Such brutes ought to be throttled. He will have to give up that bone if Wasp wants it."

Wasp did not want it. He was contented to eye the plebeian Rough with disdain from the doorstep. All at once the latter, who was jogging along in his usual hangdog manner, caught sight of the stranger. To our amazement he immediately threw down the bone, and offered battle. A ridge of bristles rose along the whole length of his back; his long nose and upper jaw wrinkled spasmodically, displaying a set of enormous teeth; and an angry growl shook his whole body.

"The dog's mad," said my friend; "he'll be chewed up. If you value your dog you had better run out, though I think it would be more appropriate to let the brute alone."

It was too late to run out. The combatants had already closed. The battle however was not over in a moment. Rough met the impetuous assaults of the bull-terrier by the original expedient of beating him off with his great fore-paws. At length the terrier got a firm grip of one of his antagonist's long ears.

"He will never let go alive," said my friend.

He had never uttered a truer observation. My suspicion that the grip was the result of design on the part of Rough was confirmed. That astute animal immediately took advantage of the "play" which his length of ear allowed him, and, throwing his enemy on the ground, made for his throat. The blood streamed from Rough's ear as he fairly drew it through the clenched teeth of the bull-terrier, but he had his revenge. His big jaws closed upon the throat of his rival; one grip was enough; the highbred expensive animal rolled over stone dead. Rough picked up his bone, and, with a villainously unconcerned swagger, trotted round to the back premises.

I followed my friend into the garden. An old man, a jobbing gardener, was leaning over the wall. His face shone with delight; he could hardly speak for exultation, notwithstanding that it was evident, by his demeanour, that he felt intuitively assured that the greatness of the occasion had thrown to the winds the ordinary forms and barriers of social restraint. Addressing us, as from an equal "platform," he said:

"I knowed there'd be a fite, and I knowed the one as 'ud win. Why, bless yer souls, that there dog as Black the

poacher left behind 'ave killed dogs double his own weight. 'E aint got his ekal; there, that 'e aint."

My friend looked at me, but said nothing.

"It was a fair fight," was all I could mutter.

My friend made no reply. Disregarding the offer of the old gardener to perform the last services for his dead favourite for a shilling, he left me.

I paid that shilling myself, and then retired indoors to meditate. It was too plain that the animal I had deemed so faithful and affectionate was not only an accomplished hypocrite, but a member of the canine criminal classes. I felt half afraid of him. It was plainly my duty to put an end to his atrocious existence.

What was it my rich neighbour's keeper had told me about the disappearance of his half-grown pheasants? Had the fellow said it in a meaning way? Had he seen the inf—the disgraceful, the well-named Rough, about my premises? No doubt that self-set bone, with pellets of shot distinctly perceptible to the touch when the hypocritical Rough had held up his leg for our sympathy, and we had lamented the hardness of a cruel world that would maim a poor innocent creature in thoughtless sport—no doubt that broken bone and those pellets were righteously inflicted by that very keeper? But how to get rid of the horrid brute before he committed some fresh atrocity? before he killed the cat or bit the baby. He might be poisoned; but how could a sensitive person like myself, who had been punished over and over again at school for looking most guilty when I was most innocent, how could I go and ask for poison?

In the midst of these reflections my wife's aunt, a lady of considerable personal and even real attractions, was announced. With her entered that dog, paying the most pointed attentions to Flossie, my wife's aunt's favourite lap-dog, a pretty brown, fox-like creature. I was puzzled. I had observed when Flossie had, on former occasions, displayed the accomplishments of walking on his hind legs and so on, that Rough had scowled upon him with secret dislike and envy. Why this change? And why did he humbly crouch before my wife's aunt and take from her hands six sweet biscuits, which I afterwards observed him get rid of with every symptom of disgust in the front garden.

"After all, although I have often wondered," said my wife's aunt, "that you should keep such an ugly creature, he

has a very amiable expression; and I am sure his disposition is most faithful and affectionate."

I said nothing; the whole thing was getting too much for me. That evening I observed that dog pass down the street with Flossie. He gambolled awkwardly before his dainty companion, who appeared charmed and amused by his uncouth attentions. The two disappeared into a wood at the end of the street.

I did not see Rough again for several days. I was rejoiced at his disappearance, and when I did meet him in a narrow lane, I was not displeased to find that he cut me dead; in fact, he paid not the slightest attention to my call. Returning a month or so later from the seaside, I called upon my wife's aunt. To my astonishment I saw in the hall a noble stuffed head in a glass case, which, after a moment's astonishment, I recognised, chiefly from its amiable and delightfully smiling expression.

"Ah," said my aunt, "doesn't the poor creature look handsome? The day I lost my poor Flossie, he came and sat just inside my gate, and, whenever I came to the window, looked up to me with the most yearning expression of sympathy you can possibly imagine. He seemed as if he was trying to comfort me for my loss. For, indeed, poor Flossie never reappeared, and after Rough had sat every day for a week just inside my gate, I took compassion on him, and adopted him. But the poor thing had been soured by ill-treatment. The fastidious lap-dogs of the neighbourhood despised him, and he, I am sorry to say, used to—to worry them. In fact, he killed two."

"Just as he did poor Flossie," I explained, with foolish inadvertence.

"Oh—h!" screamed my aunt; "the horrid creature. And you—you never told me. Well, my first impulse was to cast out his horrid effigy; but now"—here my wife's aunt assumed a chill composure—"now I shall keep him to remind me of your kindness."

That dog smiles amiably upon me every time I enter my wife's aunt's house, but Mr. Bagstraw, her solicitor, is exactly half as polite to me as he used to be.

ON THE ROAD IN FRANCE.

PART I. THE SAC À PICOT.

HITHERTO I have thought of Havre as a tropical kind of place, the home of orange-trees, parrots, green monkeys, and the little

white terrier of Havannah—with its Café de Bahia, its Circle d'Antigua, and, above all, its charming creole girls. Ah, those charming creole girls, where do they hide themselves, the pretty tropical birds, this bitter weather? A biting wind whistles down the Rue de Paris, whisking up the powdered ice; the quays are coated with a glassy, slippery covering; great icicles hang from the ships' bowsprits. And yet the sun is trying to struggle out, and lights up the curdled clouds of steam, and tinges with prismatic hues the thin frosty haze. Through the haze gleams the dimpling water-way with its soft reflections, gleam too a forest of masts, lines of white terraces, and their innumerable green and yellow persiennes.

Our steamer, the *François the First*, is hoarsely blowing forth its steam, ringing its bells, rattling its chains and hawsers, and doing its very best to get up a little excitement on shore, and bring its passengers swarming across its gangways. But the response is feeble. Two or three butter and egg merchants in blue blouses with wizened-frosted faces, and a royally stout old fish-wife who knows her place to a nicety, the warmest corner by the boiler, and sits there tranquilly knitting, while thoughtless people tumble over her; a few voyageurs de commerce—you must not call them *commis voyageurs*, if you please, anyhow at this time of the year when they form the majority of the travelling public; as for other passengers the bell invites them over and over again, but they don't come. And yet we are better off on board than shivering folk on shore might fancy. The *François the First* has a kingly fire in her cabin, not in a gimcracky swinging-stove, but in a grand massive open fire-place worthy of a baronial hall. But, ah, to see the massive fire-place slowly oscillating as the tide begins to stir gives a painful feeling of insecurity both external and internal. It is better on deck after all, with the bustle of getting out of harbour, the hauling of ropes here, the casting off of hawsers there, the narrow shaving of fat little fisher-boats daubed with red and yellow, the broad free language of the fishermen concerned, all the bustle of putting to sea, as exciting in its way as if we were bound across the Atlantic instead of just to Honfleur, on the other side of the river mouth. Once at sea the cold is not intense. There is a fine fresh breeze from the north that brings the green waves flashing up at us. The sun does its best to brighten up the noble estuary with

the bold hills that close it in, and yet do not close it in entirely, but leave a space of hazy distance, studded with white sails lighted up by sunshine, for imagination to work in.

Perched on a height above its narrow creek Honfleur shows with excellent effect, the central feature being a wonderful old-fashioned building with projecting pepper-box turrets, which seems to give a promise of all kinds of hidden quaintness. But there is nothing behind, except a pleasant little town, decidedly English in aspect, like Dorking, perhaps, or Guildford. Not quite English, however, was the commercial fourgon clattering up the steep high street, the horses unicorn fashion, the leader hitched on to help up the hill, and urged on by a fierce-looking fellow in a blue blouse who runs alongside with wild cries and war-whoops, and cracks of the whip like pistol-shots. Not English either, the enormous waggon sliding down, grinding sparks from its ponderous ironshod breaks, or the gay trappings in blue and red of the clean-limbed, round-barrelled, white horses. Not English either in its quietude and respectability, the fair going on in the marketplace—a dumb, frozen kind of fair, by the way, in which only the makers of hot gauffres seem to be doing a trade, always excepting the proprietor of the board stuck all over with clasp knives, with pistols, too, and double-barrelled guns as prizes for the bold youths who can break through the laws of gravitation—a board that fairly quivers under the iron showers of rings, “Ten for one pence, twenty for two pences.” Ingenuous British youths, avoid the bait, and keep your twopences to spend in brandy-balls or honest English bull's-eyes, rather than quoit them into the pockets of that grinning harpy.

Very English on the other hand is the sound of the bells which break out just now in a sweet melodious jangle. They have a homelike unaccustomed music about them that brings back a crowd of recollections; for where else in France do the bells sound thus sweetly? They may cling-clang all day long, but it is with a harsh strident clangour as if the bells too had served their turn in the army, and lost their voices standing sentry on cold wet nights.

If we want any further reminder of Old England here it is on the quay, where the Littlehampton steamer is loading up firkins of butter, best Normandy—I wish I could put a private mark upon it to ensure your getting it genuine and unadulterated—

and innumerable baskets of eggs. And here are great crates full of mistletoe, shorn from Norman apple-trees, and going to spend merry Christmas in England. Almost have I a mind to make myself a stowaway on that egg and butter boat, live on buttered eggs on the passage, and take my chance of a welcome on the other side. But destiny drags me reluctant to the railway-station.

"Come, Picot," said a fresh youthful voice by the ticket-window; "let us take seconds; I will pay."

"Mon Dieu," cried Picot, "why should we travel en prince? No, no; we should offend our comrades, and besides I have in my sac——"

What Picot had in his sac did not appear at the moment, as his voice was lost in the general clatter as the wicket opened and people pressed forward to take their tickets. Evidently I am now in the track of the voyageur de commerce. He is quite as energetic as his English confrère in crushing for his place, and no sooner are we let out of our pens to take our places for Lisieux than I see him dashing, regardless of age or sex, for the best place in the long third-class carriage. There are seven or eight voyageurs in this compartment and the next, all in the most refreshing high spirits. As we pass out into the frozen country the glasses are suddenly covered with hoar-frost; but there is little to reward one for the trouble of scratching peep-holes—only a snow-covered hillocky country, and a leaden sky promising more to come in the way of snow. Thus there is nothing to distract the attention from our voyageurs.

It is Picot who from the next compartment proposes cards. Picot is an old hand evidently. His closely-shaven face has a pepper-and-salty look; still he is young at heart no doubt, and loves the society of the young. Picot—it is insinuated sotto voce by Boujon, the rotund bullet-headed little man in the corner, with a bitter smile—Picot likes to take in hand young fellows who have a liberal travelling allowance. He has a kind of sagacity, too, in helping such as may help him one day or other. This time he is with young Descamp, a fresh, rosy young man, quite English-looking and clean. This last phenomenon is partly accounted for in the whisper that goes round: "Nephew of Descamp Frères—Paris—soaps." Now when Picot proposes cards the others look indifferent, if not absolutely hostile, to the proposal. Where are the cards, first of all?

"In my sac," cries Picot, dragging out a

well-worn black travelling bag from under the seat. "I always carry cards in my sac with my articles of toilette. Cards distract the mind; cards preserve from ennui." But Picot can't find his cards. After ransacking his bag ineffectually he turns out upon the seat all the contents of his sac de nuit, and unfolds every little packet with vindictive solemnity. Those cards are hiding themselves from him, but they shall be brought to light. First comes to hand a slice of jambon de Mayence, then a packet of cigars, some iron rivets, six lumps of sugar, a roll of newspapers, a cachenez, and a nightcap with a long tassel. Stay, here are the cards. No; these are Picot's business cards—"Picot, representative of Gallafontaine, ironfounder, Paris."

"Don't distress yourself, mon enfant," cries Boujon, who has been watching Picot with his set malignant smile. "I had not set my heart upon the game. We know what a farçeur is Picot."

"But on my word of honour," cries Picot, "I am more deceived than any of you. It shall not stop here. At the very next station I will have out my baggage. My malles shall be opened. The cards shall be found."

"You need not give yourself all that trouble," sneers Boujon; and then with a triumphant air he produces a pack of cards from his own pocket. Picot and his young friend climb over into our compartment, and the game begins. With the insatiable love of novelty that distinguishes the French, it is not one of their own well-known games they pitch upon; no, they must have euchre. As they all have different ideas of its rules the game that follows is far from harmonious. After a few minor squabbles a fierce contention bursts out. Burning words are exchanged. Goulet, however—he with the fat white face and laugh of Silenus—Goulet interposes with his stentorian voice: "Cards must be thrown up and the game abandoned." Picot and Boujon are restrained from flying at each other's throats, and a sulky peace is established between them, while Goulet, to create a diversion, begins to tell stories whose only point is their extreme riskiness.

All this time snow has been softly falling, and when we reach Lisieux we find a fresh thick coating of it everywhere. Three little omnibuses await us from as many different hotels. I avoid the Scylla of Boujon and Goulet, but in so doing I fall

into the Charybdis of Picot. It is dark with the surcharged gloom of a snowy sky. Some undistinguishable traveller is ensconced in the corner. Presently young Descamp comes in. Picot is coming too, as soon as he has arranged about his baggage. And so we wait while all the other omnibuses drive away. Picot's baggage takes a long time to arrange. We hear his voice in an interminable discussion with the baggage-master. He will have this packet opened; no, it does not contain the right thing; then this other, if you please. The baggage-master explodes with violence. Picot humbles himself, grovels almost, but persists and gets his way. Finally he leaves all his packages to the care of the worthy chef de baggage, even to the precious sac. "Take care that nothing is placed upon my sac," are Picot's last words. The chef mutters an inaudible reply.

On a dark snowy night one town is pretty much like another. Lisieux is only striking in the steepness and slipperiness of its streets. Our poor horse struggles up icy mountains and across frozen rivulets, and it is often a doubtful point whether he shall pull us up or we shall drag him down; or perhaps the matter may be compromised by a clean capsize. But finally we reach a level boulevard and drive under a dark porte cochère. Madame S. stands at the door of her snug, well-warmed bureau, and hospitably bids us welcome, "Enter and warm yourselves, gentlemen, pray, for it makes a froid de loup." Picot will not rest a moment, but darts out to look up his customers; but Descamp stays to stand over the fire and get some information. His fresh youthful air engages the sympathies of Madame S., and Descamp confides to her that he has three customers here, and would very much like to increase his clientèle if his hostess could recommend him. Ah, Madame S. would be delighted, but no, she cannot think of any one of sufficient importance; but Gabriel—Gabriel may know. Gabriel, the garçon, is apparently dressing for his table d'hôte, the great event of his day, for he is in his shirt-sleeves, and a spotless white necktie hangs over his arm. Gabriel is young, good-looking, and fresh as a rose; but he knew nobody who dealt in fancy soap.

It wants still an hour to the table d'hôte. My companions have all disappeared each on his mission. I have a mission, too, to buy a cake of soap, and so I thrust myself among the snow-flakes, which close

upon me like a curtain. A shop-front gleams here and there, driving a wedge of light into the darkness. Some ancient timber house shows ghost-like through the snow-flakes; a bridge discloses a vista of still darker night, and the rushing of a stream far below mingles with the beat of a water-wheel and the crash of falling ice.

The table is laid with great magnificence at the table d'hôte this night. All the resources of the house in plate and crystal are displayed. Even the siphons of seltzer are multicoloured, which gives a cheerful festive appearance. And after all there are only four of us to sit down. Gabriel, who has finished his toilet, and appears in perfect trim, explains that they expected a great affluence of voyageurs, but that no doubt the weather had delayed many. The dinner is good—too good indeed for one whose will is as weak as his digestion. But there were things in stewed trout, truffled partridge, and a wonderful pâté that a man might be well content to suffer for. Still the four travellers gazing at each other across the broad expanse of table-cloth seem to feel a certain awkwardness. Descamp comes in late, and looks slightly discouraged. A most unlucky contretemps, he explains, has deranged him. He is full of his trouble, and throws himself upon the sympathy of his brethren. His employers had three customers in this town from whom he was expected to obtain orders. With two he had been successful; but the third, the third, alas! was dead—had died in the most inconsiderate way without leaving anyone to carry on the business or give him an order. It was too bad. Instead of adding to the number of his customers, here he had lost a third of the existing clientèle. All through the banquet Descamp was haunted by the spectre of his lost customer. Picot came in just at the end of dinner—Picot rubbing his hands and in great good-humour. He confided to his young friend that he had obtained an excellent order from a new customer. Had he lost any by death? asked Descamp, with an envious look. No, no; all Picot's customers are in excellent health as a matter of course. Picot, made genial by success, promises himself to remain the night here—he had intended to travel on—to enjoy a game of cards with his comrades, only he must send for his sac.

Snow is still fast falling as we make our way across the courtyard to the estaminet. This is also a billiard-room of vast size, recently built, and smelling of mortar and

of the pitch pine with which it is panelled. A shivering few, we gather round the fire; it is a good fire, but it has not the power to warm the wide chilly space. Binet, an elderly man with a grizzled bristly moustache, and an Inverness cape wrapped round him, talks about the cold winters he has known. How he was snowed up for fifteen days in a country inn, and of the jovial time he had of it with his comrades. And he looks round at the rest of us a little disdainfully. He is quite right, he would not be able to extract much joviality from us others under similar circumstances. Descamp begins to play billiards with Florian, a traveller in drugs; but the frost has got into the cushions, from which the balls rebound heavily with a dull thud. Picot coming in introduces a momentary briskness. He is all for cards, only he has just a little word to write to his employer. Gabriel, whose duties at the table d'hôte are now over, lays out the card table, and then sits tranquilly down to smoke a cigarette by the fire. Descamp, who has still his dead customer on his mind, begins to question Gabriel. Did he know the Widow Chauvain, the one who was dead, and what had become of her business? Gabriel knew her well; but dead! no, the old lady was "très bien portante." Descamp is a little aghast. How if his customer reported dead should send an order to the firm behind his back? But he repels the disquieting suggestion. He had the news from her sister. Yet suppose it should have been somebody else's sister! Meanwhile Picot has been scribbling away, filling sheet after sheet with orders. The others look at him enviously. He modestly admits that he has had good fortune. But in a little moment he will have finished, and then for cards! The table is ready, the others are waiting, and still Picot is scribbling away. Binet—the elderly Binet—feels his dignity hurt, and waxes indignant. Who is this Picot, then, that all the world should wait upon him. Sacrr!

At this moment the door opens, letting in a waft of frosted air, that congeals our warmer atmosphere in frozen particles about us. It is the conductor of the omnibus who appears on the threshold, snow piled on his head and shoulders, his hair and beard all spiked with ice. "Ah, le sac à vous, M. Picot?"

"Yes," cried Picot anxiously; "have you not brought it?"

No; the conductor had not brought it. The baggage-master, seeing that M. Picot

was so particular about his baggage, would only give up the sac on the production of the ticket by the owner in person. Ah, how Binet rubbed his hands with joy. Here was a nice journey for this Picot, down the icy mountains and across the frozen streams. But no, Picot is a man of resource. He sits down and writes a few rapid lines. "Mon brave, you will give this to the baggage-master. He is one of my best friends, and you will bring my sac. And now, my friends, one little moment!"

At last Picot has written his orders, and taken his place at the card-table. All is tranquil for a while. Gabriel, after attempting a few impossible canons on the billiard-table, is seated by the fire, poring over a little memorandum-book filled with cabalistic characters. At intervals he rises to watch the progress of the game. The stake is a "consommation." Grogs all round. Ah, if it were only real grog—a go of Cork now, with boiling hot water in a glowing jug—ah, here were a consommation devoutly to be wished. But who can keep out this Siberian cold with tepid wine-and-water with a slice of lemon? Suddenly a storm breaks out at the card-table. Picot has revoked, or something equivalent, but he won't admit the fact or pay the penalty. In the end the veteran Binet, who has preserved some of the magnanimity of the old school, restores peace by paying down the stakes.

Once more the door opens and a white moving mass of snow and ice is recognised as the conductor. "Le sac à vous, M. Picot." "You have got it." No, the man had not got it. The baggage-master had locked up the bureau, and gone home to bed. Nothing more in the way of luggage could pass out that night. Picot tore his hair. "But how can I pass the night without my sac?"

To one who accurately knew the contents of the bag the question naturally suggested itself, Why not? What was there in the sac so indispensable to Picot? After his excellent dinner the poor man could hardly want his slice of ham. Cigars, iron rivets, sugar, were not things to go to sleep upon, his newspapers would keep till the morrow, and as for the muffler and tasselled cap, they were a seasonable but not indispensable equipment for the night.

"You will have to do without it, my friend," chuckles Binet, no doubt crediting Picot with a more extensive toilet apparatus than he actually possesses, and rejoicing in his forlorn condition. Picot, however, is not daunted. "Stay!" he

cries. "Mon brave, you know the residence of the chef de bagage." Mon brave admitted that he did. "Then you shall take him this little card and a word that I will write him. Even if he is in bed, he will be able to give his signature. Explain the urgency of the case." The conductor goes off not over well pleased with his mission. But it is difficult to resist the energy and persistency of Picot.

Did Picot get his sac? History does not say; but at seven o'clock on the following morning, just before leaving the hotel for the station, I hear a voice echoing through the corridor: "Gabriel, Gabriel, have you seen that sacré sac à Picot?"

A PRICELESS PICTURE.

ANCIENT Bologna, if sedate as a woman who has lived long enough to forget she was ever young, is not so dull a city as never to rejoice. Once every year it throws its wonted gravity aside, and shows that when it chooses to unbend it can be as gay as any of its Italian sisters. For nearly six days—that is, from the evening of the Saturday before the Feast of the Ascension to the night of Holy Thursday—do the Bolognese keep high holiday, not in celebration of that religious festival, not in remembrance of a great historical event, not in compliment to any time-honoured civic ceremony, but simply to manifest their devotion to a picture—the Madonna di San Luca—a picture a syndicate of millionaires could not buy.

The custom is of very old standing; the miracle-working Madonna being brought from her Sanctuary on the Monte della Guardia to bless Bologna with her presence, and wake it from its habitual quietude, in obedience to a senatorial decree dating as far back as 1435.

On the Saturday before the Feast of the Ascension a priest appears at the sanctuary and formally demands the delivery of the inestimable picture, that it may be carried in solemn procession along the grand arcade, nearly three miles in length, stretching from the Sanctuary to the Saragozza Gate; its arrival there being hailed with shouts of joy from citizens arrayed in their best attire, and country people in holiday dress and holiday spirits, intent upon escorting the Madonna to the cathedral, and seeing her safely lodged therein. There she stays, to feast adoring eyes, until sunset on Ascension Eve. Then placed on a litter, as

fine as velvet, precious cloths, embroidery, and gilding can make it, she is borne through the streets to the church of San Petronio, carried through the church, and set down on the steps in front of it. All Bologna's bells ring out, the priests raise their voices in a hymn of praise, every head in the thickly-packed square is bowed, every knee bent, as the Madonna, giving the benediction, moves gently backwards and forwards, and from side to side, so that none in the vast assemblage may depart unblest. The same ceremony is repeated at the Meloncello bridge the next day, as the Madonna slowly wends her way back to the sanctuary; entering the crowded fane, all ablaze with light, to the music of pealing bells, swelling organ, and well-attuned voices, and Bologna's annual "festa" is over.

According to Roman Catholic tradition this worshipped example of St. Luke's artistic genius was painted at Jerusalem in the year 34, when the Virgin was forty-seven years old; and in course of time found its way to Constantinople, to be deposited in the church of St. Sophia. There, eleven centuries after it left the saint's easel, it was seen by a pilgrim named Eutemio. As he gazed at the venerable work in ecstatic admiration, a still small voice within him whispered, "Take the holy picture to the Monte della Guardia!" Being as honest as he was pious, Eutemio did not dream of obeying the behest by taking surreptitious possession, but went boldly to the custodians of the treasures of St. Sophia and told them of the mysterious command. Without demur they surrendered the picture to his keeping, he voluntarily undertaking to restore it to its accustomed place should he fail to find its heaven-appointed home.

It may seem strange that Eutemio should have been left utterly in the dark respecting the geographical position of the Monte della Guardia, but so it was; and the pilgrim patiently plodded from land to land, until weary of wandering aimlessly about the world he resolved to take himself and his sacred charge to Rome, in hope of there obtaining some enlightenment on the subject.

It was a happy thought. Hardly had he entered the city ere he met one of its senators, rejoicing in the alliterative appellation of Pascipovero Pascipoveri, and showed him the painting, moving the senator to such admiration that he would gladly have bought it at the bearer's own

price. Faithful to his mission, Eutemio declared he would not part with his precious burden for the wealth of the world; he must take it to the Monte della Guardia. "The Monte della Guardia!" exclaimed the astonished connoisseur. "That is the hill near my native place, Bologna." Then Eutemio fell upon his knees and thanked Heaven for the opportune meeting.

He lost no time in making his way to Bologna, where Bishop Gerardo, advised of his coming by Pascipovero Pascipoveri, prepared such a reception, that Eutemio felt his pains and perseverance were well rewarded by the enthusiastic greetings of the Bolognese, who waited to attend the Madonna di San Luca to the Hermitage, on the summit of the Monte della Guardia, to be consigned to the care of the hermitesses Azzolina and Beatrice, whose installation as its guardians was formally attested by Notary Bilicio, on the 8th of May, 1160.

The Hermitage, so favoured, was an honoured but humble refuge for female devotees, owing its origin to a beautiful maiden, named Angela, who, suddenly resolving to quit the haunts of men, fled her home one morning in 1087, without giving father or mother the chance of saying nay. After a long search the runaway was found on the top of the Monte della Guardia, and, as neither argument or entreaty availed to shake her determination, Angela's father bought a small plot of ground, and built her a hut and a little chapel. Before long she was joined by her friend Angelica, and, as the story got bruited abroad, other damsels became similarly affected with a distaste for worldly love and worldly pleasure, and betook themselves to the retreat on the breezy hill-top. By-and-by Pope Celestine II. put the sisterhood under the regular canons of St. Augustine, and, thanks to his favour, the hermitage prospered exceeding.

The transformation of the hermitage into the Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca brought it into still greater repute. The faithful flocked to the new shrine with their offerings, and if they went empty-handed away, had no reason to complain, since the Madonna was never deaf to their prayers, but answered them so readily and so liberally, that her fame spread far and wide, to the great glorification of Bologna and the profits of its people.

It was probably the last-named result that impelled some evil-minded Venetians to steal the picture one dark night, and

put to sea with all speed; but the sacrilegious rascals gained nothing by their crime, for before their ship was out of sight of land their prize had disappeared, and was safe in its chosen abode again.

Well was it for Bologna that the abduction was frustrated. It would else have lost an unfailing resource in those troublous times that will afflict the best-regulated of communities. When the contentions between the rival parties of Charles de Valois and the Marchese d'Este threatened the peace of the city, the senate had the wonder-working portrait carried through the streets, and all went merry as a marriage-bell. In 1365 the Madonna's intervention proved equally efficacious against earthquake; in 1436 she stayed a pestilence. A year later the country around was under water, and fearing to be inundated themselves, the Bolognese, with one accord, turned out, waded their way to the Monte della Guardia, and brought the Madonna into the city. No sooner was she lodged in the church of St. Mattai than a strong wind arose, driving the storm-laden clouds before it, and the city was flooded with sunshine, as the weeping worshippers fell on their faces before the beneficent visitor.

At the beginning of the last century the Bolognese bethought themselves that such a potent protectress was worthy of a grander shrine, and accordingly set about erecting a new church for her occupation. The third stone was laid on July 26th, 1723, and blessed by Bernardino Marescotti, who used his eloquence to such effective purpose that not only did workmen of all sorts proffer their labour gratuitously, but men and women, of all ranks, turned themselves into beasts of burden, and bore building materials on their backs and shoulders to the summit of the hill. It was not, however, until March 25th, 1765, that the work was completed, and the edifice consecrated by Cardinal Malvezzi, with all the solemnity the occasion demanded.

The sceptic who doubts if the saint's eyes ever rested on the picture ascribed to his pencil had better keep clear of Bologna. But waiving its authenticity or non-authenticity, one may fairly question the truth of the story of how it found its way to its present quarters. In 1403 Don Gonzalez de Clavijo, journeying to the court of Timûr the Tartar, stayed at Constantinople for some days. In his narrative of his embassy he writes: "In this

city of Constantinople there is a church called *Santa Maria de la Deseetria*. It is small, and some religious canons live in it, who neither eat meat, nor drink wine, nor eat grease, nor fish containing blood. The body of the church is inlaid with very beautiful mosaic work, and contains an image of the Holy Mary, which is said to have been designed and made by the hands of the glorious and blessed Saint Luke. They say the image has performed many miracles, and the Greeks show great devotion to it. It is painted on a square board, about six palmos in breadth, and as many long, which is covered with silver, and inlaid with emeralds, sapphires, topazes, pearls, and many other stones. Every Tuesday there is a grand festival, and a great crowd of religious persons and the clergy of other churches assemble, and take the image out of the church to a court which is in front of it. It is so heavy that it takes three or four men to carry it with leathern handles. They then place it in the middle of the court, and all the people say their prayers to it with many tears and groans. Presently an old man comes and prays before the image; he then lifts it up, as if it weighed nothing, and carries it back. It is marvellous that a single man should be able to lift so great a weight, and they say that no other man but this one could raise it, because he comes of a lineage by whom it pleases God that it should be lifted. On certain great festivals in the year they carry the image to the church of St. Sophia with great solemnity."

The Castilian envoy visited Constantinople two hundred and fifty-three years after Eutemio is averred to have carried off St. Luke's Madonna. A Madonna by the same hand is to be seen in the cathedral at Milan, Genoa boasts another, and Rome claims to possess two; so that it is possible that Constantinople may have possessed two portraits of the Virgin Mary, by the beloved physician; but with Don Clavijo's testimony to their veneration for the apostle's handiwork, it seems hardly within the bounds of probability that the Constantinopolitans would permit St. Sophia to be deprived of such a treasure, even at the bidding of an inspired pilgrim.

THE FUNERAL OF DAYA RAM.

THE following legend, although here related strictly as received from oral narrative, professes, as will be seen, to have a

special locality, and to have occurred on a particular occasion. But it is not known in connexion with that occasion in the part of the country referred to. The double occurrence of events embodied in the legend is perhaps an ancient Eastern idea, localised by a professional itinerant, such as tell tales in the bazaars or at country fairs.

Daya Ram was one of the Jat chieftains, who, on the breaking up of the Mogul empire, assumed a partial independence. If any pretender to imperial authority had made his appearance, backed by a considerable force, Daya Ram would probably have acknowledged him whilst he was present, would have given him supplies, and have laughed at or cursed him when he was gone. Generally speaking, the chief was left alone in his mud fort at Hâtras, exercising a rude authority over a track about as large as the county of Kent. His personal appearance was described as that of great bodily strength; his temper hasty and irritable to a remarkable degree. He was comparatively young when Lord Lake, in August, 1803, passed up to attack Allygurh, and Daya Ram, with the imprudence of his years, offered some resistance when summoned to acknowledge the new power, but was soon brought to his senses. His fort was dismantled, but, as more peaceful times came on, and the British achieved a steady supremacy, he was allowed to live at his old quarters and sank into an ordinary Zemindar; treated, indeed, with certain marks of respect due to his former position, and, doubtless, amongst his own tribe, still looked on as a chieftain, but no longer regarded as of political importance. At length, full of years, he died, and was carried from his home to be burnt on the banks of the Ganges. The road lay through Koel, and the procession reached that place about sunset.

It was at the season of year when the autumnal Dusuhra is held, a festival called the Sports of Rama, which seem to commemorate the legendary expedition against Lanka or Ceylon, and the defeat of the giant Ravan. A huge pasteboard figure of this demon is erected in most country towns, on any open space available in the environs, is exhibited for some days, and finally attacked by men throwing fireworks, and then exploding gunpowder previously placed within. But for an evening or so before this closing scene, two little children, gaily dressed in kincob

and tinsel, are carried round in an ornamented litter, to represent Rama, and Sita, his wife.

The old chieftain was placed on a sort of bier, which is called "bahan," and the edges of this were stuck round with little coloured bannerets. In the midst, Daya Ram, with the face uncovered, the strong coarse features, the iron-grey whiskers twisted back behind the ears and mingling with the iron-grey hair, the large head surmounted with its red turban; over the trunk, a shawl; by his side, the silver-handled sword in its shagreen sheath. The bier was put under a peepul tree whilst the attendants rested, and at this juncture the pageant of the children came by with singing and rude music. And a certain awe fell on the beholders, in thinking of these children in their dawn of life, so joyful and innocent in all the glory of the little show, and then of the grim old man under the tree, who had done with all shows, and with life and all its interests, for ever!

The Dusuhra is, as the word indicates, the tenth day, but of the light half of Asuru or Asarh. In the Hindoo calendar when the month has blossomed it ends; when the completeness of the silver corolla is obtained, a fresh moon commences, and the first half of this moon or month is the dark half. The seed of the new flower must perish. And so the Indian moon wanes and waxes; not, as we say, waxes and wanes. The feast of the Sports of Rama then culminates on the tenth of the light half, and the evening now being referred to was two days short of the great celebration, or, in our phrase, the moon was eight days old. But though the time of rains had ceased, the skies were not free from mist and the moonlight was fitful and uncertain. When the twinkling lights in the bazaar were lighted the procession set forth again. A torch was carried just before and another just after the bier, and there were more at intervals amongst the company. There were one or two camels and a solitary elephant, in the howdah of which sat the chief's son, and the beast rolled on, ringing its bells, amidst a small troop of mounted retainers. An aged male relative was carried in a palanquin, and the land agents and some accountants employed similar equipages. The attendants on foot had some of them spears, some swords and leather targets. Music, too, of a wild description was not wanting, the instruments being chiefly the long horn with its curious peevish wail, blown with odd turns and twirls, and

drums of different sizes. And when the playing ceased some of the Brahmins accompanying repeated lines from ancient Sanscrit hymns in a monotonous voice. All who were present went loyally through their duty to the old chief, but with something of gloom and depression. A little of the fear he had inspired living remained; and then rumours had spread that his sins and cruelties had rent him at the last, and made his end terrible. But above all a deep sense of the impurity of death was present with them; they felt strongly (as all Hindoos do) that it was only the spirit that had lent dignity and command, and since that had fled, the carcass was mere carrion. But, foul thing as it was, it had to be entrusted to the keeping of Mother Ganges.

So the procession passed on its way, and moved along the track, sometimes under trees and sometimes on the margins of open fields, where the lofty crops of millet still stood erect. Presently they reached a little village, a few houses of which abutted on the road. All seemed still, but this was scarcely strange in so poor a hamlet, where the needy inhabitants probably had had little heart for the songs and dances of the season, and had gone off to sleep, to save lights. But to the surprise of the first members of the cavalcade a peasant was discovered crouching under a wall, and exhibiting every mark of extreme terror. They called to him, and as he did not answer one of them went and pulled him into the road. His hands shook, his teeth chattered, but no word would he utter, and seizing a moment when no one was holding him, he made off at full speed and got away. Other hamlets were reached, but all was silence and desolation in their midst. The hours moved on, and it was past midnight when the funeral approached a place of greater pretensions—less than a town, more than a village—a "bustee," as the Indian name is. As they tramped along in stillness they fully expected to hear animated noises from the bustee, for was this not the time of the "Nouratri," or the Nine Nights, and should not the women be singing and dancing in honour of Durga, and the men repeating, as their wont is, fragments of Rajpoot ballads? But all was hushed and dark. So they beat the moaning drum and blew the wailing horn, and passed into the place. They had intended to have rested a while when they entered the long street; but the grain and sweetmeat shops were closed, the lights were all extinguished,

and there were padlocks on every door. They could find no one, not even the village watchman, so they sat a short time by the well, under the great fig-tree, and then in increased depression moved forward. Outside the village they saw a man standing silent, with a spear in his hand. They called him. He came up.

"Who are you?"

"The village watchman."

"Why is the bustee silent and vacant?"

"Men have left it and fled; only the old people and children are locked up in the houses."

"Do you know what our company is?"

"I know. The funeral of Daya Ram."

"How did you know?"

"We heard you were coming."

"Wherefore, then, is all the fear?"

"Because you have been here before to-night."

"What do you mean?"

"Figure for figure, horse for horse, elephant and camels, palanquins and music, exactly as you are, you passed towards the Ganges some quarter of an hour ago."

"And was that there too?" asked one, pointing to the bier of the old chief.

The watchman nodded his head.

"And you are not afraid now?"

"Not now."

"Why not?"

"Because there was something in the first set that made all hearts quake—all hands quiver: we knew not why. There was a weird look about them that drove us mad with apprehension. Never a word would they speak; they only looked, and that with far-off eyes. So when lights were seen again in the distance, all fled, lest a more fearful spectacle should come. But you, I see, are flesh and blood."

The procession went on, but not in an orderly way as before. The eight-day moon was sinking now, and sinking wrapt in clouds; a wind arose and some of the torches were extinguished. The uppermost leaves of trees rustled violently, and, as some said, syllabled unlucky words. One party got into a mango-grove and shouted for help. Those who were near the bier found they had left the road without knowing it, and were on the steps of a tank. Another set, with one of the torches, stumbled into the enclosure of a way-side temple, and when once within the walls found no exit, but wandered round and round the interminable masonry. Some getting into boggy ground shrieked that they were sinking. Others threw them-

selves on the ground and wept. The horses neighed. The camels made the odd bubbling sound they produce when excited, and the solitary elephant blew his trump. All was confusion; the air was full of sinister influences and unfavourable powers appeared in the ascendant.

Then suddenly the night drew to its conclusion. A faint yellow bright ray appeared in the east, and the whole procession was gathered together once more. They were on a road; the descent to the sacred river had come, and the village at the ford lay below. In the dim, uncertain morning a paler expanse than the earth spread beyond the trees in the ravine, and they knew it was the Ganges.

And as they stood silent and watchful for a moment, they saw gleams as if from torches issue from under the foliage by the margin of the water, and they heard drums and horns, like phantom echoes of their own, and beheld the doppel-gänger procession with its intangible camels and elephant pass on to the water, as on to a sheet of glass, and in mid-stream pass gradually under the water, and disappear like a mirage, when a change of atmosphere breaks up the landscape. And then all was still. And now the cold grey morning was fairly born and the air purged of the terrors of the darkness, and the men took heart again and moved forward.

And in another hour's time there was a slender smoke arising from the sand beyond the trees, which indicated that the old chieftain was slowly turning to ashes.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXV. GOLDEN CAVES.

"WITH these thoughts in my mind, and careful not to utter a word aloud lest I should woo Leontine to her destruction, I continued my descent. I had committed myself to a perilous enterprise. The links of the rusty chain rasped the skin off the palms of my hands, and I had need of all my strength to preserve my hold. Had I not found here and there a resting-place for my feet in the jutting rocks, and had I not been inured to danger, I should not be here now to make this record.

"I reached the end of the chain, and, with a sense of great relief, I saw beneath me an opening in the face of the precipice. The chain was just long enough to enable me to swing myself into this harbour of

safety—a comparatively easy task because of the trees which grew in its mouth. Utterly exhausted, I sank upon the ground, and allowed myself time to recover my breath, which had been almost spent by my exertions and excitement. Then I surveyed the position in which I found myself.

“The place in which I was sheltered was a cave formed by Nature. From the heights above its mouth could not be seen, and even outwards from the sea it was scarcely possible it could be distinguished, in consequence of its being thousands of feet higher than the water level. No light came from within; the cave was in deep darkness. I listened a moment; a mournful wail floated to my ears; it was Leontine, calling for her master; I did not answer her. It afforded me satisfaction to think that I had left on the rocks above some portion of the food I had brought with me from my hut, for I knew that Leontine would await my return.

“The afternoon was already far advanced, but I was determined not to abandon the adventure at least until another sun had risen. Too much time would be lost in returning now to my hut; and indeed I felt that I had need of rest before I attempted to climb the rocks by the aid of the chain. In a couple of hours the sun would set; the night would be dark, but there was nothing to fear. My blanket was strapped round my shoulders, and I had sufficient food for the next twenty-four hours. I had also the means of obtaining light, and was thus well prepared for present emergency.

“So deep was the darkness in the cave that I struck a light before I made a move inwards. For some little distance the roof was man high; the path was encumbered with loose stones and brushwood, but these I easily cleared away, and stepping forward cautiously, and making sure of my ground to avoid a possible pitfall, I soon succeeded in penetrating so far into the cave that the light of day was entirely shut out. The walls of this natural tunnel were dry and free from slime, and when my eyes became accustomed to the gloom, I derived assistance from the varying densities of shade, which almost served the purposes of colour. Slowly I made my way onwards, meeting with no obstacle to my progress which I was not able to surmount.

“It was a strange journey. The profound stillness, the knowledge that I was hidden in the very bowels of the earth, and that I

was treading a path which, if it had been trodden by mortal, had not been trodden for centuries, the fancies which thronged my brain and the grotesque shapes which grew out of the darkness—these, coupled with the uncertainty of the result, filled me with exultation; and even when I heard a faint sound for which I could not account I had no feeling of fear. I paused occasionally and listened, in the endeavour to discover its nature and the direction from which it proceeded. But the tunnel was of eccentric form, winding now this way, now that, with abrupt turns which I was compelled to follow, and the sound seemed to proceed now from one direction, now from another, and now to cease altogether. At one time the sound resembled the singing of birds, at another the rustling of leaves; the impressions it produced were always pleasant and agreeable.

“I lost count of time; I could not tell whether I had walked, and crept, and crawled for an hour, or two, or twelve. I was certain but of one thing—that the path I was treading led downwards, and that every step I took brought me nearer to the sea level. Sometimes the path was very steep, and taxed my strength severely, but I was equal to every difficulty, and continued my adventurous journey without hurt. Monotony was destroyed by an exhilarating sense of danger.

“After a time I began to make discoveries. A short distance before me I saw a reflection of bright colour, and when I reached it I found that it proceeded from without. There was a cleft in the rock, and through this opening I beheld the rays of the setting sun. The space was not wide enough for the body of a man, and I stood at the narrow window, and drank in the fresh air, and watched the colour die out of the western sky. Before me stretched a vast expanse of cloud and water, and both for a little while were luminous with light; then gradually crept on the darkness of night, and the solemn ocean lay beneath and beyond, enveloped in mysterious shadow. At that moment I was imbued with a truer sense of the mighty grandeur of Nature and of the insignificance of man. Unceasingly, unerringly move the silent forces of Nature, majestic and unmistakable, heedless of pigmy mortals. In set forms of speech I have never prayed; but at fitting moments my soul has breathed its prayer, and this was one. So I stood at the narrow window in the rock, and thought my prayer of worship, and wonder,

and gratitude. Isolated as I was from sight or companionship of human creatures I was not alone. The heavens and the sea were with me.

"Intending to be up with the sun, I unstrapped my blanket, and wrapping it round me, lay down and slept. The soft, mysterious sound ran through my dreams, and created fancies which did not disturb my rest.

"Early in the morning I was astir, strong and refreshed; and then to my delight I discovered that I was not to continue my journey in utter darkness. Light came through other clefts in the rocks. Downward and ever downward I pursued my way, and at noon, as near as I could judge, the nature of the sound which had accompanied me for so many hours was revealed to me. It was a waterfall from the topmost height, creeping and rushing down the moss-clad range—here boldly leaping into space from jutting rock, here broken into a hundred rivulets, here united again, and beautifying the air with spray, and foam which caught rare colour from sun and moon and ran with it, laughing, to the sea. I filled my gourd with the water, and drank; it was very sweet and fresh. Shortly afterwards my progress was suddenly arrested, and I could proceed no farther. A chasm stopped my way, and I had no means of descending it. The danger of attempting it without ropes was too great. I had no option but to retrace my steps, and I did so with the determination to return with such appliances as were necessary to prosecute my discovery to the end. As I anticipated, Leontine was waiting for me, and her delight, when she saw me climbing up to her by means of the chain, was unbounded. It was midnight before we reached my hut.

"Many weeks were occupied in getting together the articles that were required. I had to obtain them from the islanders, and I proceeded with caution, so that they should have no suspicion of the task I was engaged upon. During the interval I twice descended the chain, and devoted some time to the clearing away of the loose stones and brushwood which somewhat impeded my progress; and the labour of descending and ascending was so great, and caused me such pain, that I made a ladder of ropes and slung it over the rocks by the side of the chain.

"I was compelled to take Joseph Sylvester partly into my confidence. He

and his people being out fishing, saw from the sea a figure climb the face of the precipice. The distance was too great for them to distinguish my form, and they agreed not to mention the subject to the islanders until I was spoken to concerning it.

"No person but you lives on the mountain," said Joseph Sylvester to me, having sought me for the purpose of conversing with me upon the subject.

"No," I replied, "only I."

"Last night we were out fishing," said the lad, "and we saw a figure creeping down the mountain. My grandfather did not know whether it was man or animal."

"Did you see," I asked, "by what means this man or animal was effecting the descent. It is no small thing to do; one false step would be fatal."

"That it was that made us wonder," said Joseph. "We saw nothing but the figure creeping down, and then suddenly it vanished in the darkness."

"You have not spoken of it to others, Joseph."

"No," said the lad; "Grandfather Matthew thought it might be you, and that you might not wish it to be known."

"It was I, Joseph, and I do not wish it to be known to others than yourselves."

"You may be sure we will not mention it, then; but it is a strange thing to do."

"Do I not live a strange life?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Then it is natural I should do strange things. The mountain and I are friends. No one knows it so well as I. Joseph, I will confide in you. Generations ago a dark and terrible deed was committed on that mountain, and the bodies of those involved in it lie unburied in unknown depths. Say that it is a whim of mine to find their bones, and give them burial."

"Is that really your purpose?" asked Joseph, his clear eyes looking into mine.

"Press me not too closely, Joseph; set it down to that, and let it content you. One day, perhaps, you will learn all my secrets, but you must not seek to know what I wish to conceal. Rely upon one thing; what I do is done with good intent."

"With that I changed the subject, and I have every reason to believe that the Sylvesters have complied with my wish. Nevertheless, from that time I have chosen dark nights for my descent."

"At length everything was prepared, and having so arranged that I could be absent from my hut for a week, or longer if necessary, I set out with the intention of

completing my discovery. I had previously conveyed a quantity of food to the spot where my course had been arrested; ropes, chains, and tools were also there, so that I had but little to burden myself with. I had taken other precautions as well.

"It occurred to me that I might meet with an accident which might prevent my return; in plainer words, I might meet my death. In that event, there were certain things I wished done.

"I sent a message by one of my pigeons to Evangeline, and told her to meet me at the foot of the mountain. She met me there. I had my dog Leontine with me. I told Evangeline that I had work to do which would prevent me from coming to the valleys, and even from communicating with her, for fourteen days.

"You have never seen one of my huts," I said; "would you be afraid to ascend the mountain with me?"

"She laughed at the idea, and with an eagerness which showed how she had longed for the opportunity, took my hand, and said she would come at once.

"I conducted her to my lower hut, where I had collected all my animals and birds, and I asked her if she would visit the hut every three days, to see that they wanted nothing. She gave a delighted consent.

"May Joseph come with me?" she asked.

"I answered No, not in the performance of this task; he might accompany her to the foot of the mountain, and wait for her there.

"But," I continued, "if at the end of fourteen days, you do not hear from me, let Joseph accompany you to my hut at the top of the mountain. There you will find a sealed book which you will give to Margaret Sylvester. She will know what to do with it."

"Evangeline gazed at me with a look of alarm.

"You are not going to leave us," she said.

"You would be sorry to lose me, Evangeline?" I asked.

"Her eyes filled with tears, and I hastened to re-assure her.

"There is nothing to fear," I said; "you have but to follow my instructions, and all will be well. You would not wish that I should choose another in whom to place my fullest confidence?"

"No, indeed," she replied, with a little sob.

"That is why I have spoken to you, and I tell you again there is nothing to fear. I love only you; next to you, Joseph. You see, my dear, I want to try you. You are growing, Evangeline; to-morrow you will be a woman."

"To-morrow!" she exclaimed.

"Why," I said, gaily, "of course to-morrow, which means in a little while. So to-morrow you will be a beautiful woman, and I shall live to take pride in you, and to help your happiness in many ways. It is but fair, my dear; you have helped me in my darkest hours. No, there is nothing to fear; only do this that I ask you."

"Yes," she said; "I will do it."

"Here," said I, "take this smooth branch, and cut in it a notch every morning, commencing with to-morrow. Before you cut the fourteenth notch, which will mean fourteen days, you shall hear from me. You are looking at Leontine; shall I give her to you?"

"Oh," she said, "it is too much."

"No, my dear, nothing is too much from me to you. I would give you my life if it would help you. I give you Leontine; she is yours. You will find her faithful, but not more faithful than her master." I stooped and kissed the dog. "Call her," I said.

"Evangeline stepped a few paces away, and called 'Leontine.'

"The dog looked into my face wistfully; I nodded, and pointed to Evangeline, and the faithful animal went at once and stood by the side of Evangeline, and licked her hand. Tears were in Leontine's eyes. It was a dog's sacrifice; man could not have performed and endured it more nobly.

"So, all being arranged, I set out for the final attempt. I started at night, and by noon of the following day I reached the mouth of the chasm. The remaining portion of the day was occupied in fastening the ropes by which I intended to make the descent. It was only a matter of time; no other difficulty presented itself. Then, after a few hours' rest, I lowered food and water (learning in this way the depth of the chasm), and grasping the rope, carefully felt my way to surface-ground. It was more easily accomplished than I expected. I stood upon solid rock, and, looking upwards, fancied I could see a dim rift of light at the very top of the mountain. In that case the range, from top to bottom, was hollowed out by nature. At that moment it was not a matter of importance to convince myself whether this was really

so, and I applied myself to what was of more interest to me. Having reached the depth of the chasm, was there any outlet downwards? Yes, and not difficult to find—a road, most circuitous and eccentric, leading direct to the sea-shore.

No smooth velvet sands met my eyes, but a scene as wild as I had ever gazed upon. The shore-line was dotted with caves into which the sea rushed with tremendous force. The waves, broken by hidden rocks, seethed and hissed against the ancient walls, and reared their foaming crests in anger; and as they receded to the calmer haven which lay beyond the treacherous rocks, the water poured in torrents from every crag and basin and sped swiftly after the retreating seas. Then there was peace, and the caves glistened with diamond spray, lit up with rainbow colour; but in a few moments the waves rolled inwards, to renew the eternal conflict, and the air was filled with fury and wild confusion. At the mouth of one of the largest of the caves were huge masses of sea-weed, clinging to the rocks with such tenacity as to resist successfully the tremendous onslaught of the waves; and as the sea attacked their thick brown belts and bands, they curled and writhed and gasped, like a myriad tawny serpents fighting desperately for life in the embrace of a merciless enemy.

"Grand and terrible as was the scene, it did not present itself to me on this occasion, in its grandest and most terrible aspect, for the tide was running out. It was fortunate for me, as in two or three hours I hoped to be able to reach the lower shore; at present it was impossible to do so, and I could do nothing but wait.

"In the meantime I was not idle; there was food enough for eyes and mind. The contrast between the fury of the sea within the caves and its peacefulness a short distance beyond the line of hidden rocks was wonderful. Doubtless those who were acquainted with the sea which surrounded the Silver Isle were well aware of the danger of this shore line, and were careful not to approach it. No boat could live in the turmoil of these waters; a moment or two would suffice to dash it into fragments. No chance, therefore, for human life, which, in such a struggle, must be drawn inevitably to its swift destruction.

"Firmly fixed in the rocks, at a distance of thirty or forty feet, was an object which attracted my attention. It was in the form of a huge Cross, and seemed to be fashioned of wood. Weed, and moss, and shell-fish

encrusted it; the action of the water had worn it into holes here and there, but it was not rotted.

"How ran the legend of Evangeline and the brothers? The man who had played the part of Cain had, in his remorse, cut an enormous pine-tree into the shape of a Cross, and had carved upon it the figure of the Saviour. This work, which occupied him for twenty years, he intended to set up on the highest crown of the mountain of snow, as a warning to sinners and an appeal for mercy. He was not permitted to complete his work of expiation. At the supreme moment, when the last finishing touch had been given to the labour of a lifetime, he and his symbol, in the midst of a fearful storm, were hurled from the heights. The islanders declare that it was a divine judgment upon him. That might be; what interested me most was that there was truth in the bare details of the story, and that its confirmation lay beneath me.

"The man's death was swift and terrible and merciful, and doubtless his bones were swept out to sea—a fitting resting-place.

"I watched the waves recede inch by inch, and, when I deemed it safe to do so, I descended the sharp rocks, and stood on the lower floor of the cave. Tempting pools lay here and there, and I bathed in one and renewed my strength, thinking with exultation that I was the first living man whose foot had ever touched this shore. Not only the cave which held the work of a sinner's repentance, but a hundred others, were left in peace by the retreating sea, and the rocks upon which the gigantic sea-weed grew were also left in peace to recover from the fever of the struggle for life.

"My first task was to examine the Cross and the Figure carved upon it. Even at this distance of time, and worn and overlaid as it was, I saw that it was a grand work, and could have been executed by no man weak in mind or body.

"The Cross had fallen into its natural position, and stood upright.

"The points of the rocks glistened with light; the shore was strewn with shells of great beauty. Colour and form were here in rare perfection.

"So full of novelty was the position in which I found myself that for a time I paid no attention to a particular colour which in calmer moments would have drawn and fixed my attention. Looking at it idly, and with no suspicion in my mind, I saw that it was of bright yellow, and I judged it to

be sand of the sea of a richer colour than that which lay on the shore. But presently I noticed that, except in particular spots, there was no trace of this brighter colour, and that it presented itself only in crevices of the rocks, into which it had been thrown by the action of the sea. I took a pinch of it in my hand, and to my surprise, discovered that it was of infinitely greater weight than ordinary sea-sand, that it was of irregular formation (again unlike the sand of the sea), and that it was of metallic substance.

"A metal, then. What metal?"

"Gold!"

"The idea, flashing suddenly upon me, staggered me for a little while, and I could not grasp its full meaning.

"How could this precious metal have found its way into this strange and unlikely region?"

"I laughed at myself for the question, and looking around, as though for an answer, it seemed to me that Nature was deriding me for my ignorance and presumption.

"In itself, gold was of less value in the Great Scheme than almost any of the other objects by which I was surrounded—the life which crept and crawled, and lived only for a day, and then died. In their life, flowers beautify; in their death, they fertilise. Weeds, rank things of the earth, repellent insects, all have their uses; but gold is gold, and remains always the same.

"That man should have made it of exceptional value is of small account. Why should not gold be found in the Silver Isle? Silver was found here, and Mauvain was the first discoverer. Mauvain discovered silver. Why should not Ranf discover gold?"

"The islanders might think little of it, might even be displeased at the discovery. Golden grain, in their eyes, was infinitely

more precious—the grain that waves in cornfields, that glistens in the eye of the sun, that whispers of plenty, or rather of Enough, and contentment—that was the grain which ministered to their happiness and which they valued most. But not to all is given such wisdom. In this isle the gold around me was valueless, mayhap. But elsewhere?"

"I was bewildered at the prospect held out by the discovery. It was mine; not another should share it with me. Power, fame, the adulation of men, the smiles of beautiful women, the pleasures of the world in every intoxicating form, were mine. They were here, in my grasp. I could purchase them, and enjoy them, and, if I cared, revenge myself upon those who had inflicted misery upon me.

"It is right that I should set down here some idea of what passed through my mind when I first held the golden sand in my hand. It shows me in my true light—of the earth earthy, sordid, and prone to temptation, unable to resist it when it held out hope of pleasure.

"It is not out of pride that I set beneath the above confession my belief that there are in me two beings, and that I have overpowered the grosser of these. In exceptional moments, such as these I am describing, this lower self starts forward, and whispers cunningly and urges to unworthy action; but only for a time; for soon my better self asserts itself, and thrusts out of sight that worse half of man which too often leads to his destruction.

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXXII. CARLTON TERRACE.

THREE days after this it was arranged that Isabel should be taken to Carlton Terrace to be accepted there into the full good graces of her future father-in-law, and to go through the pleasant ceremony of seeing the house in which it was to be her destiny to live as mistress. What can be more interesting to a girl than this first visit to her future home? And now Isabel Boncassen was to make her first visit to the house in Carlton Terrace, which the duke had already declared his purpose of surrendering to the young couple. She was going among very grand things—so grand that those whose affairs in life are less magnificent may think that her mind should have soared altogether above chairs and tables, and reposed itself among diamonds, gold and silver ornaments, rich necklaces, the old masters, and alabaster statuary. But dukes and duchesses must sit upon chairs—or at any rate on sofas—as well as their poorer brethren, and probably have the same regard for their comfort. Isabel was not above her future furniture, or the rooms that were to be her rooms, or the stairs which she would have to tread, or the pillow on which her head must rest. She had never yet seen even the outside of the house in which she was to live, and was now prepared to make her visit, with as much enthusiasm as though her future abode was to be prepared for her in a small house in a small street beyond Islington.

But the duke was no doubt more than the house, the father-in-law more than the

tables. Isabel, in the ordinary way of society, he had already known almost with intimacy. She, the while, had been well aware that if all things could possibly be made to run smoothly with her, this lordly host, who was so pleasantly courteous to her, would become her father-in-law. But she had known also that he, in his courtesy, had been altogether unaware of any such intention on her part, and that she would now present herself to him in an aspect very different from that in which she had hitherto been regarded. She was well aware that the duke had not wished to take her into his family—would not himself have chosen her for his son's wife. She had seen enough to make her sure that he had even chosen another bride for his heir. She had been too clever not to perceive that Lady Mabel Grex had been not only selected—but almost accepted as though the thing had been certain. She had learned nearly the whole truth from Silverbridge, who was not good at keeping a secret from one to whom his heart was open. That story had been all but read by her with exactness. "I cannot lose you now," she had said to him, leaning on his arm—"I cannot afford to lose you now, but I fear that some one else is losing you." To this he answered nothing, but simply pressed her closer to his side. "Someone else," she continued, "who perhaps may have reason to think that you have injured her." "No," he said boldly; "no; there is no such person." For he had never ceased to assure himself that, in all that matter with Mabel Grex, he had been guilty of no treachery. There had been a moment indeed, in which she might have taken him; but she had chosen to let it pass from her. All of which, or nearly all of which, Isabel

now saw, and had seen also that the duke had been a consenting party to that other arrangement. She had reason therefore to doubt the manner of her acceptance.

But she had been accepted. She had made such acceptance by him a stipulation in her acceptance of his son. She was sure of the ground on which she trod, and was determined to carry herself, if not with pride, yet with dignity. There might be difficulties before her, but it should not be her fault if she were not as good a countess, and—when time would have it so—as good a duchess as another.

The visit was made not quite in the fashion in which Silverbridge himself had wished. His idea had been to call for Isabel in his cab, and take her down to Carlton Terrace. "Mother must go with me," she had said. Then he looked blank—as he could look when he was disappointed, as he had looked when she would not talk to him at the lunch, when she told him that it was not her business to entertain him. "Don't be selfish," she added, laughing. "Do you think that mother will not want to have seen the house that I am to live in?"

"She shall come afterwards as often as she likes."

"What—paying me morning visits from New York! She must come now, if you please. Love me, love my mother."

"I am awfully fond of her," said Silverbridge, who felt that he really had behaved well to the old lady.

"So am I—and therefore she shall go and see the house now. You are as good as gold—and do everything just as I tell you. But a good time is coming, when I shall have to do everything that you tell me." Then it was arranged that Mrs. and Miss Boncassen were to be taken down to the house in their own carriage, and were to be received at the door by Lord Silverbridge.

Another arrangement had also been made. Isabel was to be taken to the duke immediately upon her arrival and to be left for awhile with him, alone, so that he might express himself as he might find fit to do to this newly adopted child. It was a matter to him of such importance that nothing remaining to him in his life could equal it. It was not simply that she was to be the wife of his son—though that, in itself, was a consideration very sacred. Had it been Gerald who was bringing to him a bride, the occasion would have had less of awe. But this girl, this American girl,

was to be the mother and grandmother of future Dukes of Omnium—the ancestress, it was to be hoped, of all future Dukes of Omnium! By what she might be, by what she might have in her of mental fibre, of high or low quality, of true or untrue womanliness, were to be fashioned those who in days to come might be amongst the strongest and most faithful bulwarks of the constitution. An England without a Duke of Omnium—or at any rate without any duke—what would it be? And yet he knew that with bad dukes, his country would be in worse stress than though she had none at all. An aristocracy—yes; but an aristocracy that shall be of the very best! He believed, himself, thoroughly in his order; but if his order, or many of his order, should become as was now Lord Grex, then, he thought, that his order not only must go to the wall, but that, in the cause of humanity, it had better do so. With all this daily, hourly, always in his mind, this matter in the choice of a wife for his heir was to him of solemn importance.

When they arrived Silverbridge was there and led them first of all into the dining-room. "My!" said Mrs. Boncassen, as she looked around her. "I thought that our Fifth Avenue parlours whipped everything in the way of city houses."

"What a nice little room for Darby and Joan to sit down to eat a mutton-chop in," said Isabel.

"It's a beastly great barrack," said Silverbridge—"but the best of it is that we never use it. We'll have a cosy little place for Darby and Joan—you'll see. Now come to the governor. I've got to leave you with him."

"Oh me! I am in such a fright."

"He can't eat you," said Mrs. Boncassen.

"And he won't even bite," said Silverbridge.

"I should not mind that because I could bite again. But if he looks as though he thought I shouldn't do, I shall drop."

"My belief is that he's almost as much in love with you as I am," said Silverbridge, as he took her to the door of the duke's room.

"Here we are, sir," he said.

"My dear," said the duke, rising up and coming to her, "I am very glad to see you. It is good of you to come to me." Then he took her in both his hands, and kissed her forehead and her lips. She, as she put her face up to him, stood quite still in his embrace, but her eyes were bright with pleasure.

"Shall I leave her?" said Silverbridge.

"For a few minutes."

"Don't keep her too long, for I want to take her all over the house."

"A few minutes—and then I will bring her up to the drawing-room." Upon this the door was closed, and Isabel was alone with her new father. "And so, my dear, you are to be my child."

"If you will have me."

"Come here, and sit down by me. Your father has already told you that—has he not?"

"He has told me that you have consented."

"And Silverbridge has said as much?"

"I would sooner hear it from you than from either of them."

"Then hear it from me. You shall be my child. And if you will love me you shall be very dear to me. You shall be my own child—as dear as my own. I must either love his wife very dearly, or else I must be an unhappy man. And she must love me dearly, or I must be unhappy."

"I will love you," she said, pressing his hand.

"And now let me say some few words to you—only let there be no bitterness in them to your young heart. When I say that I take you to my heart, you may be sure that I do so thoroughly. You shall be as dear to me and as near as though you had been all English."

"Shall I?"

"There shall no difference be made. My boy's wife shall be my daughter in very deed. But I had not wished it to be so."

"I knew that—but could I have given him up?"

"He at any rate could not give you up. There were little prejudices—you can understand that."

"Oh, yes."

"We who wear black coats could not bring ourselves readily to put on scarlet garments; nor should we sit comfortably with our legs crossed like Turks."

"I am your scarlet coat and your cross-legged Turk," she said, with feigned self-reproach in her voice, but with a sparkle of mirth in her eye.

"But when I have once got into my scarlet coat I can be very proud of it, and when I am once seated in my divan I shall find it of all postures the easiest. Do you understand me?"

"I think so."

"Not a shade of any prejudice shall be left to darken my mind. There shall be

no feeling but that you are in truth his chosen wife. After all, neither can country, nor rank, nor wealth, make a good woman. Education can do much. But nature must have done much also."

"Do not expect too much of me."

"I will so expect that all shall be taken for the best. You know, I think, that I have liked you since I first saw you."

"I know that you have always been good to me."

"I have liked you from the first. That you are lovely perhaps is no merit; though, to speak the truth, I am well pleased that Silverbridge should have found so much beauty."

"That is all a matter of taste, I suppose," she said, laughing.

"But there is much that a young woman may do for herself which I think you have done. A silly girl, though she had been a second Helen, would hardly have satisfied me."

"Or perhaps him," said Isabel.

"Or him; and it is in that feeling that I find my chief satisfaction—that he should have had the sense to have liked such a one as you better than others. Now I have said it. As not being one of us I did at first object to his choice. As being what you are yourself, I am altogether reconciled to it. Do not keep him long waiting."

"I do not think he likes to be kept waiting for anything."

"I dare say not. I dare say not. And now there is one thing else." Then the duke unlocked a little drawer that was close to his hand, and taking out a ring put it on her finger. It was a bar of diamonds, perhaps a dozen of them, fixed in a little circlet of gold. "This must never leave you," he said.

"It never shall—having come from you."

"It was the first present that I gave to my wife, and it is the first that I give to you. You may imagine how sacred it is to me. On no other hand could it be worn without something which to me would be akin to sacrilege. Now I must not keep you longer or Silverbridge will be storming about the house. He, of course, will tell me when it is to be; but do not you keep him long waiting." Then he kissed her, and led her up into the drawing-room. When he had spoken a word of greeting to Mrs. Boncassen, he left them to their own devices.

After that they spent the best part of an hour in going over the house—but even

that was done in a manner unsatisfactory to Silverbridge. Wherever Isabel went, there Mrs. Boncassen went also. There might have been some fun in showing even the back kitchens to his bride elect, by herself—but there was none in wandering about those vast underground regions with a stout old lady who was really interested in the cooking apparatus and the washhouses. The bedrooms one after another became tedious to him, when Mrs. Boncassen would make communications respecting each of them, to her daughter. "That is Gerald's room," said Silverbridge. "You have never seen Gerald. He is such a brick." Mrs. Boncassen was charmed with the whips and sticks and boxing-gloves in Gerald's room, and expressed an opinion that young men in the States mostly carried their knickknacks about with them to the universities. When she was told that he had another collection of knickknacks at Matching, and another at Oxford, she thought that he was a very extravagant young man. Isabel, who had heard all about the gambling in Scotland, looked round at her lover and smiled.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Boncassen, as they took their leave, "it is a very grand house, and I hope with all my heart you may have your health there and be happy. But I don't know that you'll be any happier because it's so big."

"Wait till you see Gatherum," said Silverbridge. "That, I own, does make me unhappy. It has been calculated that three months at Gatherum Castle would drive a philosopher mad."

In all this there had been a certain amount of disappointment for Silverbridge; but on that evening, before dinner in Brook Street, he received compensation. As the day was one somewhat peculiar in its nature, he decided that it should be kept altogether as a holiday, and he did not therefore go down to the House. And, not going to the House, of course he spent the time with the Boncassens. "You know you ought to go," Isabel said to him when they found themselves alone together in the back drawing-room.

"Of course I ought."

"Then go. Do you think I would keep a Briton from his duties?"

"Not though the constitution should fall in ruins. Don't you suppose that a man wants to rest after inspecting all the pots and pans in that establishment? A woman,

I believe, could go on doing that kind of thing all day long."

"You should remember at least that the—woman—was interesting herself about your pots and pans."

"And now, Bella, tell me what the governor said to you." Then she showed him the ring. "Did he give you that?" She nodded her head in assent. "I did not think he would ever have parted with that."

"It was your mother's."

"She wore it always. I almost think that I never saw her hand without it. He would not have given you that unless he had meant to be very good to you."

"He was very good to me. Silverbridge, I have a great deal to do, to learn to be your wife."

"I'll teach you."

"Yes; you'll teach me. But will you teach me right? There is something almost awful in your father's serious dignity and solemn appreciation of the responsibilities of his position. Will you ever come to that?"

"I shall never be a great man as he is."

"It seems to me that life to him is a load—which he does not object to carry, but which he knows must be carried with a great struggle."

"I suppose it ought to be so with everyone."

"Yes," she said, "but the higher you put your foot on the ladder the more constant should be your thought that your stepping requires care. I fear that I am climbing too high."

"You can't come down now, my young woman."

"I have to go on now—and do it as best I can. I will try to do my best. I will try to do my best. I told him so, and now I tell you so. I will try to do my best."

"Perhaps after all I am only a 'pert poppet,'" she said half an hour afterwards, for Silverbridge had told her of that terrible mistake made by poor Dolly Longstaff.

"Brute!" he exclaimed.

"Not at all. And when we are settled down in the real Darby-and-Joan way I shall hope to see Mr. Longstaff very often. I daresay he won't call me a pert poppet, and I shall not remind him of the word. But I shall always think of it; and remembering the way in which my character struck an educated Englishman—who was not altogether ill-disposed towards me—I may hope to improve myself."

CHAPTER LXXIII. "I HAVE NEVER LOVED YOU."

SILVERBRIDGE had now been in town three or four weeks, and Lady Mabel Grex had also been in London all that time, and yet he had not seen her. She had told him that she loved him, and had asked him plainly to make her his wife. He had told her that he could not do so—that he was altogether resolved to make another woman his wife. Then she had rebuked him, and had demanded from him how he dared to treat her as he had done. His conscience was clear. He had his own code of morals as to such matters, and had, as he regarded it, kept within the law. But she thought that she was badly treated, and had declared that she was now left out in the cold for ever through his treachery. Then her last word had been almost the worst of all, "Who can tell what may come to pass?"—showing too plainly that she would not even now give up her hope. Before the month was up she wrote to him as follows:

"DEAR LORD SILVERBRIDGE,—Why do you not come and see me? Are friends so plentiful with you that one so staunch as I may be thrown over? But of course I know why you do not come. Put all that aside—and come. I cannot hurt you. I have learned to feel that certain things which the world regards as too awful to be talked of—except in the way of scandal, may be discussed and then laid aside just like other subjects. What though I wear a wig or a wooden leg, I may still be fairly comfortable among my companions unless I crucify myself by trying to hide my misfortune. It is not the presence of the skeleton that crushes us. Not even that will hurt us much if we let him go about the house as he lists. It is the everlasting effort which the horror makes to peep out of his cupboard that robs us of our ease. At any rate come and see me. Of course I know that you are to be married to Miss Boncassen. Who does not know it? The trumpeters have been at work for the last week.—Your very sincere friend,
MABEL."

He wished that she had not written. Of course he must go to her. And though there was a word or two in her letter which had angered him, his feelings towards her were kindly. Had not that American angel flown across the Atlantic to his arms he could have been well content to make her his wife. But the interview at the present moment could

hardly be other than painful. She could, she said, talk of her own misfortunes, but the subject would be very painful to him. It was not to him a skeleton, to be locked out of sight; but it had been a misfortune, and the sooner that such misfortunes could be forgotten the better.

He knew what she meant about trumpeters. She had intended to signify that Isabel in her pride had boasted of her matrimonial prospects. Of course there had been trumpets. Are there not always trumpets when a marriage is contemplated, magnificent enough to be called an alliance? As for that he himself had blown the trumpets. He had told everybody that he was going to be married to Miss Boncassen. Isabel had blown no trumpets. In her own straightforward way she had told the truth to whom it concerned. Of course he would go and see Lady Mabel, but he trusted that for her own sake nothing would be said about trumpets.

"So you have come at last," Mabel said when he entered the room. "No; Miss Cassewary is not here. As I wanted to see you alone I got her to go out this morning. Why did you not come before?"

"You said in your letter that you knew why."

"But in saying so I was accusing you of cowardice—was I not?"

"It was not cowardice."

"Why then did you not come?"

"I thought you would hardly wish to see me so soon—after what passed."

"That is honest, at any rate. You felt that I must be too much ashamed of what I said to be able to look you in the face."

"Not that exactly."

"Any other man would have felt the same, but no other man would be honest enough to tell me so. I do not think that ever in your life you have constrained yourself to the civility of a lie."

"I hope not."

"To be civil and false is often better than to be harsh and true. I may be soothed by the courtesy and yet not deceived by the lie. But, what I told you in my letter—which I hope you have destroyed—"

"I will destroy it."

"Do. It was not intended for the partner of your future joys. As I told you then, I can talk freely. Why not? We know it—both of us. How your conscience may be I cannot tell; but mine is clear from that soil with which you think it should be smirched."

"I think nothing of the sort."

"Yes, Silverbridge, you do. You have said to yourself this: That girl has determined to get me, and she has not scrupled as to how she would do it."

"No such idea has ever crossed my mind."

"But you have never told yourself of the encouragement which you gave me. Such condemnation as I have spoken of would have been just if my efforts had been sanctioned by no words, no looks, no deeds, from you. Did you not give me warrant for thinking that you were my lover?"

That theory by which he had justified himself to himself seemed to fall away from him under her questioning. He could not now remember his words to her in those old days before Miss Boncassen had crossed his path; but he did know that he had once intended to make her understand that he loved her. She had not understood him—or understanding, had not accepted his words; and therefore he had thought himself free. But it now seemed that he had not been entitled so to regard himself. There she sat, looking at him, waiting for his answer; and he who had been so sure that he had committed no sin against her, had not a word to say to her.

"I want your answer to that, Lord Silverbridge. I have told you that I would have no skeleton in the cupboard. Down at Matching, and before that at Killancodlem, I appealed to you, asking you to take me as your wife."

"Hardly that."

"Altogether that! I will have nothing denied that I have done—nor will I be ashamed of anything. I did do so—even after this infatuation. I thought then that one so volatile might perhaps fly back again."

"I shall not do that," said he, frowning at her.

"You need trouble yourself with no assurance, my friend. Let us understand each other now. I am not now supposing that you can fly back again. You have found your perch, and you must settle on it like a good domestic barn-door fowl." Again he scowled. If she were too hard upon him he would certainly turn upon her. "No; you will not fly back again now—but was I, or was I not, justified when you came to Killancodlem in thinking that my lover had come there?"

"How can I tell? It is my own justification I am thinking of."

"I see all that. But we cannot both be justified. Did you mean to suppose that you were speaking to me words in earnest when there—sitting in that very spot—you spoke to me of your love."

"Did I speak of my love?"

"Did you speak of your love! And now, Silverbridge—for if there be an English gentleman on earth I think that you are one—as a gentleman tell me this. Did you not even tell your father that I should be your wife? I know you did."

"Did he tell you?"

"Men such as you and he, who cannot even lie with your eyelids, who will not condescend to cover up a secret by a moment of feigned inanimation, have many voices. He did tell me; but he broke no confidence. He told me, but did not mean to tell me. Now you also have told me."

"I did. I told him so. And then I changed my mind."

"I know you changed your mind. Men often do. A pinker pink, a whiter white—a finger that will press you just half an ounce the closer—a cheek that will consent to let itself come just a little nearer——!"

"No; no; no!" It was because Isabel had not easily consented to such approaches!

"Trifles such as these will do it—and some such trifles have done it with you. It would be beneath me to make comparisons where I might seem to be the gainer. I grant her beauty. She is very lovely. She has succeeded."

"I have succeeded."

"But—I am justified, and you are condemned. Is it not so? Tell me like a man."

"You are justified."

"And you are condemned? When you told me that I should be your wife, and then told your father the same story, was I to think it all meant nothing! Have you deceived me?"

"I did mean it."

"Have you deceived me? What! you cannot deny it, and yet have not the manliness to own it to a poor woman who can only save herself from humiliation by extorting the truth from you!"

"Oh, Mabel, I am so sorry it should be so."

"I believe you are—with a sorrow that will last till she is again sitting close to you. Nor, Silverbridge, do I wish it to be longer. No—no—no. Your fault, after all, has not been great. You deceived, but did not mean to deceive me."

"Never; never."

"And I fancy you have never known how much you bore about with you. Your modesty has been so perfect that you have not thought of yourself as more than other men. You have forgotten that you have had in your hand the disposal to some one woman of a throne in Paradise."

"I don't suppose you thought of that."

"But I did. Why should I tell falsehoods now. I have determined that you should know everything—but I could better confess to you my own sins when I had shown that you too have not been innocent. Not think of it! Do not men think of high titles and great wealth and power and place? And if men, why should not women? Do not men try to get them—and are they not even applauded for their energy? A woman has but one way to try. I tried."

"I do not think it was all for that."

"How shall I answer that without a confession which even I am not hardened enough to make? In truth, Silverbridge, I have never loved you."

He drew himself up slowly before he answered her, and gradually assumed a look very different from that easy boyish smile which was customary to him. "I am glad of that," he said.

"Why are you glad?"

"Now I have no regrets."

"You need have none. It was necessary to me that I should have my little triumph—that I should show you that I knew how far you had wronged me! But now I wish that you should know everything. I have never loved you."

"There is an end of it then."

"But I have liked you so well—so much better than all others! A dozen men have asked me to marry them. And though they might be nothing till they made that request, then they became—things of horror to me. But you were not a thing of horror. I could have become your wife, and I think that I could have learned to love you."

"It is best as it is."

"I ought to say so too; but I have a doubt. I should have liked to be Duchess of Omnium, and perhaps I might have fitted the place better than one who can as yet know but little of its duties or its privileges. I may, perhaps, think that that other arrangement would have been better even for you."

"I can take care of myself in that."

"I should have married you without loving you, but I should have done so

determined to serve you with devotion which a woman who does love hardly thinks necessary. I would have so done my duty that you should never have guessed that my heart had been in the keeping of another man."

"Another man!"

"Yes; of course. If there had been no other man, why not you? Am I so hard, do you think that I can love no one? Are not you such a one that a girl would naturally love—were she not preoccupied? That a woman should love seems as necessary as that a man should not."

"A man can love too."

"No—hardly. He can admire, and he can like, and he can fondle and be fond. He can admire, and approve, and perhaps worship. He can know of a woman that she is part of himself, the most sacred part, and therefore will protect her from the very winds. But all that will not make love. It does not come to a man that to be separated from a woman is to be dislocated from his very self. A man has but one centre, and that is himself. A woman has two. Though the second may never be seen by her, may live in the arms of another, may do all for that other that man can do for woman—still, still, though he be half the globe asunder from her, still he is to her the half of her existence. If she really love, there is, I fancy, no end of it. To the end of time I shall love Frank Tregear."

"Tregear!"

"Who else?"

"He is engaged to Mary."

"Of course he is. Why not!—to her or whomsoever else he might like best. He is as true I doubt not to your sister as you are to your American beauty—or as you would have been to me had fancy held. He used to love me."

"You were always friends."

"Always—dear friends. And he would have loved me if a man were capable of loving. But he could sever himself from me easily, just when he was told to do so. I thought that I could do the same. But I cannot. A jackal is born a jackal, and not a lion, and cannot help himself. So is a woman born—a woman. They are clinging, parasite things, which cannot but adhere, though they destroy themselves by adhering. Do not suppose that I take a pride in it. I would give one of my eyes to be able to disregard him."

"Time will do it."

"Yes; time—that brings wrinkles and

rouge-pots and rheumatism. Though I have so hated those men as to be unable to endure them, still I want some man's house, and his name—some man's bread and wine—some man's jewels and titles and woods and parks and gardens—if I can get them. Time can help a man in his sorrow. If he begins at forty to make speeches, or to win races, or to breed oxen, he can yet live a prosperous life. Time is but a poor consoler for a young woman who has to be married."

"Oh, Mabel."

"And now let there be no more about it. I know—that I can trust you."

"Indeed you may."

"Though you will tell her everything else you will not tell her this."

"No—not this."

"And surely you will not tell your sister!"

"I shall tell no one."

"It is because you are so true that I have dared to trust you. I had to justify myself—and then to confess. Had I at that one moment taken you at your word, you would never have known anything of all this. 'There is a tide in the affairs of men—!' But I let the flood go by! I shall not see you again now before you are married; but come to me afterwards."

ON THE ROAD IN FRANCE.

PART II. MONSIEUR FLAIREAU.

APPROACHING Caen day opens sulkily over a broad open plain; over great fields covered with snow; cattle here and there in groups picking at frosted tufts of herbage, or standing singly disconsolate on hillocks the wind has swept bare. Perhaps it is the contrast with the brilliant white snow that makes Caen itself look so yellow—a ruddy kind of yellow. Or perhaps this is the natural colour, and Caen exports all her best white stone to foreign parts and keeps only inferior kinds for her own buildings. Plenty of stone anyhow, and of all colours, has been employed in our hotel. The staircases are stone; there are stone galleries and stone steps leading to the bed-rooms. Where the floors are not stone they are tile—a charming summer resort, no doubt.

There is one snug room in the house—the bureau, where madame sits, a good fire blazing beside her, a chaufferette under her feet. It is customary for us voyageurs to look in at the bureau to say bon jour to madame, to ask after bébé—there is actually a bébé at our hotel—an unheard-of inno-

vation, but one that seems to be relished; and to give a glance at the glass show-case appropriated to our letters. In this kind of receptacle there is always a residuum of unclaimed letters. Touchet is not likely ever to claim that yellow fly-blown missive; he could not face his employers after his last round, and balanced his accounts with a revolver—a weapon, alas, becoming as familiar to France as to America. And as for that official letter from the Ministry of Finance, which has a kind of odour of "contributions in arrear," that wily Billon to whom it is addressed has looked at it once or twice already as a fox might at a steel trap, but has no mind to claim it. To-day, as it happens, all this débris is concealed by an array of letters and cards just arrived, all addressed to one M. Flaireau.

"You are prayed to visit me." "Don't forget to call en passant." "Everything the most urgent and pressing on my part to see you." Decidedly a popular character this M. Flaireau.

A lean and spectacled man, who is also looking for his letters, makes a sardonic grimace and addresses madame:

"So we expect M. Flaireau. I recognise his hand in many of those dispatches."

"Ah, we are rivals!" sweetly suggests madame with a deprecating smile.

Flaireau's rival breakfasts with me in anticipation of the table d'hôte. We live well, we voyageurs: two grand meals a day, with wine ad libitum, and our chamber for seven francs, including service. At breakfast six good plates almost make me forget my train. "What! will not monsieur finish his breakfast?" cries François. François in an old tricot, with a dirty wisp of a handkerchief round his neck, is busy laying the table for the grand déjeuner.

The day is fine; the sun would shine if it could, but a hard black frost is closing in, and the streets where the snow is cleared are slippery with ice. The railway carriages are thickly roofed with ice; the big black luggage-vans with the significant inscription, "Hommes, 32; chevaux, 6." "Ah, yes," cries the conductor of the train; "it is like the Prussian year, only colder." The engines are the only things distinctly warm. The foot-warmers are tepid only, and their chief use is to keep one's feet out of the snow-broth brought in on passengers' shoes. All the talk is of the cold and of the block of the country roads by snow. Here is a carrier who brought his cart into Caen yesterday, but could not get home

again, and is going back by rail to allay the anxiety of his master and customers. There is a voyageur who hopes to reach some outlying village, if not by the ordinary diligence, anyhow by the *malle poste*. But he is assured with one voice by the country people around him that there is not a chance even for the mail except by going on foot.

For awhile we traverse broad grassy prairies, now one vast frozen plain, but before long the hills close up, and we enter a narrow valley where there is only just room for the river; it is the valley of the Orne, into which somehow the railway contrives to elbow. A pretty, simple valley it is, and a charming, brisk little river with shooting rapids and still pools, and sometimes a footpath alongside winding among the trees. But the still pools are nearly frozen over, and there is a brilliant fringe of ice even in the rapids; while the overhanging vegetation is powdered with snow and festooned with icicles. Sometimes we leave the river altogether, and cut across one of its gracious curves in an artificial gorge of our own, only to join it higher up and find it still more charming. Presently the scenery culminates at the juncture of a side valley opening out a vista of softly-outlined hills. Close by is Harcourt, which, if it is worthy of its emplacement, should be indeed a lovable town. Ascending still, the snow becomes deeper, the cold more intense, the scenery more wild. We are skirting now the Norman Bocage, the Highlands of Duke William's country, the Devonshire of Normandy, in the bosom of which are so many charming valleys; the country of Olivier Basselin, of the Vaux de Vire. By-and-by we come upon real rugged slate rocks, which geologists tell us were ages ago a reef in the sea already hoar and battered rocks, formed cycles of ages before in some tepid shallow ocean when life was still in its rude beginnings.

With a jerk and a scream we plunge into a tunnel that carries us away from the pretty Orne valley, and we emerge into a country more gloomy and stern, with the sombre austerity of grit and limestone. Then we come to Condé, one of the numerous Condés, distinguished this one as *sur Noireau*. We have passed through Devonshire, and now, with some dislocation of geography, we find ourselves in Lancashire, or perhaps Yorkshire—an industrial region something between the two, with factories scattered about and numerous dwellings,

which do not as yet form any important nucleus in the way of a town.

A little further on we stop at Flers, the metropolis of this district, a town built of dark limestone, with stern, rigid-looking streets that lead directly out upon the moorland. The streams that rise about here find their way, some to the Orne and its pleasant valley, others to gloomy Brittany; and the country strikes us as a kind of no man's land—a debateable ground with inhabitants neither Normans, Bretons, nor Manceaux, but something of each. Indeed, everything looks so dismal here—the gloomy town, the bleak frozen country, the snowladen sky that threatens to descend bodily upon us—all this is so depressing as to suggest an immediate return to the shelter of one's own wigwam. To be snowed-up at Flers in the society of jovial voyageurs is too dreadful a thing to be lightly risked.

The station, with its noisy engines, is a cheerful place after Flers. More voyageurs in the train with a sprinkling of peasants. Peasants from Caen way mostly, of a race thoroughly and unmixedly Norman, who have even preserved the features distinctive of the race. A long somewhat aquiline nose, mouth and chin firm and finely-cut, full cold eyes; altogether the face you may expect to see on a thirteenth-century effigy of some De Bohun or De Mortaign. Add to this a clanging resonant patois quite different from the bull-like bellowings of the high Norman. "*Cha coor tra ben pow*," remarks one of the blue-bloused peasants to his wife; a rather enigmatical sentence if one did not know he means "*Cela court très bien, n'est-ce pas*," or that the train is going at good speed. The same man remarks that we are getting near "*Keng*," thus approaching closely to the current English pronunciation of Caen.

At the table d'hôte at Caen that night there appears a mighty swarm of voyageurs. The table stretches out into the far distance, and there is hardly a place vacant. Sixty or more, mostly young men, nearly all sallow, and with black hair. On my left is the man in spectacles who in the morning was sneering at Flaireau. On my other hand a chair is reserved, and, just after dinner has commenced, a portly leonine man, with a ruddy beard and a grand expanse of shirt-front, plumps down into the seat. Instinctively I feel that this must be Flaireau. I am not deceived, a murmur of recognition greets him. The landlord, who is in the centre between two high columns of white plates, slicing and saucing as hard

as he can—the landlord leans back in his chair, and, catching the eye of the newly-arrived guest, waves his hand graciously: “Boujour, Monsieur Flaireau.”

The man in spectacles on the other side of me—the trade rival, also bows to Flaireau, who returns his salutation with florid, almost disdainful politeness. It does not evidently disconcert Flaireau in the least to find his rival on the ground before him. Flaireau, it must be known, is the great man with the great firm of Froment and Risler of Paris. He is not one of those who have to make themselves importunate to secure an order, to thrust themselves forward regardless of rebuffs. It is rather for Flaireau to discriminate. Is such a one worthy of being inscribed on my books? To be waited upon by Flaireau is in itself a mark of solvency and good repute. Should Flaireau turn his back upon you, as well go at once and make up your bilan for bankruptcy, unless you prefer to save your honour by blowing out your brains.

François, whom we saw this morning in his kilted jacket and dirty neck-tie, is now in full evening dress, and radiant with delight at the work before him. It is a pleasure to François to dart from end to end of the long table, remove a plate, supply a fresh one, and all in the intervals of the regular service. The tardy ones fare as well as those who were up to time, which seems at first blush against true ethical principles, and to offer a premium on unpunctuality. But it seems that to be in full time for dinner is regarded as compromising to the reputation of the individual voyageur, and as indicating slackness of occupation. On the other hand, to be very late involves cold dishes and fag-ends. This morning at breakfast I knotted my napkin about the neck of my half-finished bottle of wine; but in this I showed a want of knowledge of commercial usage. The wine is common to the table, and it is the proper thing before you help yourself; always excepting the first drop or so of the bottle, which convention enacts that you should turn into your own glass—have we here a survival of the ancient precautions against poison which made it incumbent on the host to first taste the wine he gave to his guests, or is it merely that politeness compels me to swallow the fragments of cork and particles of the “green seal” which an unskilful drawer may have strewed on the surface of the wine?—before you help yourself to

fill the glass of your neighbours on either hand. A dexterous turn of the wrist obviates any drip upon the table-cloth.

Half way through dinner—for us of the first flight, that is; François and the laggards will be going on for hours after this—the landlord, to whom an entrée gives a moment of leisure, is called out to the bureau. He returns with a telegram in his hand, which he gives to Monsieur Flaireau as he passes. Flaireau receives the despatch with his usual dignified impassiveness. He opens it, flattens it out, reads it carefully, and goes on with his dinner. His spectacled rival appears to be much more excited than he, and cannot repress the signs of a vivid curiosity. The despatch, no doubt, announces some change in prices—something that may be cut a centime lower, and thus cut away the ground perhaps from under the feet of sarcastic spectacles. The latter is evidently unquiet about the matter. Nay, the shabby fellow is actually peering over my shoulder, trying, no doubt, to snatch the purport of the message. Flaireau detects the glance, looks full at his rival, then with a movement of disdainful self-confidence, no doubt, pushes over to him the despatch. Take every advantage you please, and still I don’t care for you. Thus I read the expression on Flaireau’s face.

The spectacled rival reads the telegram carefully; the two exchange looks. Actually after that they grasp each other’s hands behind my back. “Elle est sauvée,” cries the lean man. “Yes,” replies Flaireau, and finds a particle of dust in the corner of his eye, which it requires a pocket-handkerchief to remove. Then the story becomes known to the little group about. It is not told, it is divined.

It is the time for the general out-rush of commercial travellers—the great half-yearly swarm that spreads over France like a hive of bees over a bean-field in flower. Flaireau is ready of course, his route marked out, his customers advised, every hour of his valuable time arranged for, his samples all prepared, the most ravishing patterns, the finest textures. Froment and Risler have much at stake in this journey. After a long season of slackness and depression the symptoms of revival are showing, and the firm have embarked largely hoping to take things at the flood. Flaireau’s orders will bring back prosperity to the house, sorely tried of late, solid as is its reputation. He leaves Paris by the early train next morning for the west. But during that night his

little girl, an only child, is taken ill, dangerously ill, with croup. She has been running joyously about during the day in the newly-fallen snow in the gardens of the Luxembourg; a chill has seized her. When early morning comes, and the fiacre is at the door to take Flaireau to the station, his child is dying. But Flaireau must go. The campaign has opened; he is on duty; honour is at stake, his commercial reputation. Duty calls him; he must go. But there follows him everywhere in the train as it darts through the snowy-frozen country, in the magasins as he books his orders, the vision of his cherished little girl suffering, dying, and calling always, but ever more faintly, for papa. Telegrams reach him everywhere, but they announce no improvement. The one before this bade him prepare for the worst. And this last one that he dreaded, that he knew would contain the fatal irrevocable sentence, announces that the crisis has passed, "*Elle est sauvée.*"

The news travels up and down that long table where the voyageurs are feasting. Everyone tries to catch Flaireau's eye, to nod a kindly greeting. Let us take a bumper of this not too generous wine and drink a health to Mademoiselle Flaireau.

It would not do to leave Caen without paying a visit to the churches, and that involves early rising. It is bitterly cold in the early morning, snow has been falling heavily, but it has now ceased; everywhere there is a thick coating of it. The only people about are the priests, huddled up in their wadded cloaks, with broad-brimmed hats pulled down over their ears, and voyageurs with pattern books under their arms. To all the churches there are well-beaten tracks, early as it is, converging through the snow. Here and there an old lady, with her *bonne*, is trotting home from early mass, a little blue with cold, but serene in the consciousness of duty performed, and looking forward to the hot cup of chocolate. Out of this commonplace world rise the two great basilicas of Caen, the church of William and the church of Matilda, with a kind of conscious dignity; the one with its aspiring pride, the other in its quaint sweet primness, as if instinct with the souls of their founders. And they seem to look at each other wistfully through the thin frosted air, as if with some secret sympathy in their loneliness and isolation, in their unfitness for all the devices of the world of small creatures at their feet.

If this were an artfully-got-up narrative

I should here make a point of finding Flaireau on his knees in an obscure corner of one of the churches rendering hearty thanks. But, no; the tracks that are made churchwards early in the cold winter mornings through the frosted snow are not trodden by the pious feet of voyageurs de commerce.

And now I am homeward bound. The steamer *Cygne* for Havre lies almost frozen up in the narrow channel, masts, yards, funnel, boats, all thickly coated with ice. But there is a glorious fire in the cabin and only half-a-dozen passengers, and those of a pleasant sort, to share it. Then a delightful old lady in an apron and poke-bonnet puts in her head and suggests hot coffee. And the sun comes out presently, trying to squeeze out a little warmth, just enough to make the deck endurable. The river is canalised and not interesting, except for a certain seafaring look it has, while the boats upon it, sharp and high at stem and stern, have a Scandinavian air about them not seen elsewhere along the coast. We meet a procession of rude boats loaded with sand, each rowed by one man, gaunt hungry-looking boatmen, coming up with the tide. Everywhere there are fowlers with their fowling-pieces hiding behind banks, prowling cautiously along creeks, each with his one lean dog. Now and then our steamer puts up a wild duck from the river, which runs the gauntlet of the guns, while all the lean dogs stand on their hind legs and bark at it. Nearer the sea an enormous girder-bridge, pivoted on a pier in the middle of the river, is swung round at our approach. Two men work it with winches from the centre pier; on either side a cart and a handful of foot-passengers are waiting for the return of the flying-bridge.

And now we are in sight of Ouistreham, on a low spit of land, half in the river, half at sea. A fine Norman peaked tower dominates a clump of dwellings and a cluster of masts that make up what strikes us as the saltiest-looking place imaginable, almost cut off from the land and accessible only to seafaring folk. Three Danish coasters, with the white cross flying, are coming out of harbour as we pass the long pier. They know the way of old, these Danes, and might have found far-off cousins at this day in Ouistreham.

The low coast line at the mouth of the Orne soon gives place to hills and steep scarped cliffs. There is a frosty haze over the distance, with gleams of sunshine and white sails breaking out of the gloom.

By-and-by we hear the syren from Havre
pierhead booming her song shrilly over the
sea. Half-a-dozen ships loom through the
light mist standing with us for the harbour
mouth.

Our journey is made. Adieu Messieurs
les voyageurs de commerce !

UNDER THE MANGO.

UNDER the solemn mango shade

The white-skinned conquerors stood ;

The Saxon foot was planted down,

The Saxon face wore a lordly frown,

As they paused by the swirling flood.

Cringing and creeping round them,

The servile natives came ;

Of ancient curse and doom they told,

Of the race that owned that soil of old,

Of their great god's guardian name.

Carelessly laughed the Englishmen,

By one, by two, by three ;

"Sprite, ban, or legend, we'll have our house,

Under the deep cool shade of the boughs,

Under the mango-tree."

They dug the strong foundation,

Through turf and root and bone ;

For many and white, and ghastly, and bare,

Were the things they brought to the upper air,

Ere the builders' task was done.

In the whispering Indian evening,

By their finished work they laid,

Laughing, jesting, o'er pipe and glass,

While the squirrels darted amid the grass,

Under the mango shade.

Bright in starlight and moonlight,

Fanned by the river breeze,

The silence of the jungle dark,

Just broken by sudden hoot or bark,

And the whish of the waving trees.

Suddenly stood before them

An old white-bearded man ;

In his lifted hand a skull he held,

And the loungers gazed like men half-spelled,

As his bitter speech began.

And by his father's ashes,

By their desecrated graves,

He cursed the spoilers as they lay,

He cursed the house that stood that day

Beside the Kama's waves.

"Ere the next fruit shows on the mango,

Ye shall perish one and all !

Sudden and soon your deaths shall be,

And the work ye have wrought 'neath the mango-tree,

Shall not survive your fall."

He flung the skull among them,

And with a wild weird cry

Plunged in the depths of the rapid river,

That sung its own sweet song for ever

Under the Eastern sky.

And or ever upon the mango

The next year's fruit was seen,

O'er the graves of two of that merry group,

Rang the farewell shot of the saddened troop,

Whose comrades they had been.

He breasted the rushing Kama,

The last left of the three ;

The strong young arms were true and tried,

Yet a corpse was left by the eddying tide,

Under the mango-tree.

He lay 'mid the desolate ruins,

Of the house the seer had doomed ;

For the tempest had crushed it in its place,

And the spot where they stood it was hard to trace,

'Mid bright poison weeds entombed.

Far too wild a story for credence,

From modern minds to sue ;

Yet hard and real is the riddle of life,

And each breath we draw is with marvel rife,

And—the wonderful tale is true.

THE MISSING MAN.

A STORY OF A FACT.

SHE was a curious sort of woman : I could
never quite make her out. Evidently she
had "a past," but she would not tell me
much about it, until a mere accident opened
it all up. I will not stop to relate how I
knew her, but come to the point at once.

I was dawdling one morning over the
Times, when my eye fell upon an adver-
tisement about a missing man ; I forget how
it ran, but he had disappeared in some
mysterious way, had never been heard of,
and that sort of thing : was supposed to
have had a large sum of money about him,
and a reward was offered for such informa-
tion as might lead to his discovery, &c.—
you know, the usual business.

Well, I cannot say why, but I happened
to read this advertisement out to my friend,
and as I went on, glancing down the paper,
I said :

"Ah ! poor fellow, he will never be heard
of again ; robbed and murdered, no doubt ;
these disappearances are all undiscovered
murders, I suppose."

I heard her move uneasily and sigh, and,
as I continued reading to myself, there
followed a sob and a moan. Looking up, I
saw to my surprise that she had buried
her face in her hands, and was crying
bitterly.

Rising and crossing the room, I asked
what was the matter.

It was a long time before she could
speak ; at last she said, through her sobs, in
a kind of absent way :

"No, no ; they are not all murdered, not
all."

"Why what in the name of mischief do
you know about such things ?" I enquired.
"What has come to you, poor child ? Calm
yourself. How should you know whether
they are all murdered or not ?"

"Because," she went on presently, and
looking at me in a strange sad manner, her
pretty brown eyes filled with tears, "because
I have too much reason. But there, it's
very foolish of me ; I have no right to bore
you in this way—forgive me ;" and she
rose to leave the room.

I stopped her ; I saw I was on the brink
of a revelation ; I did not intend to miss
it, for I was fond of her, and consequently
interested. So I pressed my advantage,

the end being that I elicited a very strange story; true, I have not the least doubt. Briefly this is it, though I shall only give it in her words when it serves me best to do so. In its narration she once or twice grew so dramatic that I will try to remember exactly what she said.

Her husband must have been a man of good family, but an utter scamp, gambler, spendthrift, and drunkard; all his own people turned their backs on him. Drooping lower and lower, he reached a very low ebb indeed at last, and she had a bad time of it with him. They had been living somewhere in Yorkshire, her racing, betting—Heaven knows what. The Doncaster meeting was coming round, and he found the region getting too hot for him, so he made a bolt of it, and came to London, bringing her with him (they had no children); came, as I understood, with a couple of portmanteaus, and under an assumed name—of course she never told me his real one. He took a small, old-fashioned, furnished cottage for three months; a dilapidated place somewhere near Kilburn, quite on the outskirts, and where the new neighbourhood, which has now sprung up, was only then first beginning to be thought of. There were a few new roads laid out, and here and there an odd house or two erected, with the shells of others incomplete—you know the sort of place, all scaffold poles, cabbage gardens, dead cats, battered tin-kettles, and stagnant pools.

They had been in this precious abode but three days, when what happened, happened. They were without a servant—in the house alone, in fact, the wife becoming the drudge meanwhile. A high wall surrounded the garden in which the cottage stood, it having been a neat little box in its day, quite in the country. An old and now almost disused road ran along one side of this wall, which had a door in it amongst some thick trees. Well, it was early in September, the weather was close and sultry, and on the third evening, as it was getting dusk, she strolled out and sat down on a bench under these trees near the door, leaving him sulkily smoking in the house.

"Sad and miserable indeed I was as I sat there," went on my friend, "thinking, thinking, thinking, in the silent gloaming. Everything was as still as death in that dreary neighbourhood, so that when the sound of a footstep coming slowly along the road by the side of the wall caught my ear, I almost started; but when I heard the footstep suddenly totter, then stop close to

the door, and someone stagger against it, I rose from sheer nervousness. When to this sound succeeded a long-drawn gasp and moan, and then a heavy thud, as of the person falling to the ground, with an instinctive pity I flew to the door, and, drawing back the lock, gently opened it. There, on the step, lay, as well as I could see by the twilight, a young well-dressed man. He made an effort to rise when he saw me, partly regained his feet, caught at the door-post, staggered, and fell headlong into our garden. All this was but the work of a moment, and now thoroughly alarmed, and hardly knowing what I did, I closed the door and rushed into the house. My husband met me on the threshold.

"What now? What's all that scrimmage about?" he said.

"Timidly I told him.

"You fool, are we not hard-up enough already, but you must be playing the Good Samaritan, and let the man in? Do you want to turn the place into an hospital? He's drunk, no doubt."

With this he reached the spot where the unfortunate man lay face downwards upon the edge of the soft, unmown lawn. Gently turning him over, my husband went on:

"Why, he's dying, if not dead; we must fetch a doctor. A pretty mess you have got us into, but we must go through it honestly, or else who knows what we may be charged with—murder, perhaps! Be off and get a doctor; there's a red lamp at the second turning on the left down this road."

"I flew to do his bidding, terrified by his words, which I saw had some reason in them, and had nearly reached the house, when he called out:

"Here, go out this way, by this door here, into the road; it's nearer."

"I returned, and was about to open the garden door, close to which he was still bending over the body, when I saw he was examining the contents of a large portemonnaie, which he had taken from the pocket of the prostrate, unconscious man. It seemed to be full of notes and gold. I hesitated, but fearing to remonstrate, was drawing back the bolt, when he whispered:

"Stop—wait a minute. Did anyone see you let him in?"

"No one; there is not a creature about, and the road is not overlooked," I answered.

"No, nor this corner of the garden

where we are—no, it's too much shut in by trees, and it's getting too dark.'

"Whilst speaking, he was looking round to assure himself that he was unobserved, and, seeming satisfied, began to further examine the contents of the young man's pockets and to transfer the portemonnaie, a letter or two, a handsome gold watch and chain, and a scarf-pin, to his own.

"What are you doing?' I timidly asked.

"Mind your own business," he said, 'do as I tell you, and hold your tongue. I'll go for the doctor myself; but first of all we must get him into the house. Here, catch hold of his feet.'

"Then, without listening to my protests, my husband raised in his arms the slim, helpless form of the young man, and, with my assistance, carried him along the path, under the shadow of the high wall and trees, into the house, and laid him on a sofa in the little breakfast-parlour that gave upon the lawn by an open sash window.

"Light a candle, pull down the blind, get some water and brandy; he is not quite dead," said my husband, whilst examining the man's pocket-handkerchief. 'No initials, nothing to identify him by. Good! Now I will go for the doctor; you stay with him. Put a little more brandy to his lips from time to time, loosen his necktie—so, and now, mind, when I return with the doctor, if there have been any signs of consciousness, or if the poor fellow speaks at all, keep it to yourself; don't say a word, you can tell me when the doctor is gone. The man is not dead, but he will die, I think, and if he does die without speaking—well, we shall lose nothing for our hospitality; it's worth risking. Mind, now, what I tell you,' he added with a fierce look at me; 'if you don't, I'll be the death of you.'

"Then he went out through the front door and gate, ostentatiously in a hurry, and I heard him running down the silent road. I turned to my patient, and found him still breathing, but quite unconscious.

"Terrified and bewildered I hardly know how long it was before I heard hurrying footsteps again on the road; and presently, having let himself in by the latch-key, my husband appeared with a stranger, the doctor, a seedy, needy-looking man.

"Rapidly examining the patient, he said, with his finger on the pulse:

"About twenty minutes since he was seized, eh? H'm, your younger brother, you say?'

"Yes," answered my husband promptly, with a significant look at me as I started at his reply.

"The doctor had his ear on the man's chest, whilst my husband continued with assumed emotion:

"My youngest, my favourite brother. Dear sir, pray tell me—Ah! I fear by your face; but say, is there no hope?'

"The doctor shook his head.

"Oh, will he die?'

"The doctor bowed his head, and my husband buried his face in his hands for a moment.

"I was aghast, perplexed beyond measure, and was about to speak when another fierce look checked me.

"When the doctor had moistened the patient's lips once more with brandy, and after using the stethoscope for several minutes, he said with professional gravity:

"It is my painful duty to tell you that you must prepare for the worst.'

"Ah, I feared so!' said my husband. 'My poor brother was supposed to have disease of the heart; it was the opinion expressed by a physician two years ago.'

"This is not the heart," said the doctor, feeling the pulse again. 'This is cerebral hæmorrhage—apoplexy, in fact. He is all but gone, nothing can be done.'

"Then there was a slight convulsion, and the doctor continued:

"I fear I can be of no further use professionally; but can I help you to do what is necessary now, or do you know any—'

"No, we know no one in the neighbourhood; we are strangers here," interrupted my husband. 'We are from Cornwall, and are come to live in London, and have only been in the house three days. My dear brother came to stay with us yesterday. He has been out all day. The moment he came in he fainted, and then—and then I ran for you. Will there be any need for an inquest?'

"Indeed," said the doctor, 'I'm afraid there will.'

"Oh, how very distressing!' went on my husband. 'Can we not be spared this pain?'

"The other paused, and then said slowly, with a peculiar expression on his face:

"Well, surely, surely with what you tell me, and with what I have seen of the case, I might perhaps certify, and so spare you the distress of any enquiry.'

"Thank you, thank you a thousand times," said my husband earnestly, as I saw him press a couple of the sovereigns he had

lately taken from the dead man's pocket into the doctor's hand.

"Very well, then," answered that functionary; 'I will manage it, and do all that is necessary. I will send someone immediately. Good-night.'

"When he was gone I summoned up courage to ask the meaning of what I had heard.

"What are your intentions? Pray tell me," I said.

"You always were an idiot," he answered, 'but I will try and make you understand for once in a way. Any woman who was not a fool, and had been a loving wife and alive to her husband's welfare, could have seen with half an eye what my game is. It's a very simple one, and mind you do not spoil it, or it will be the worse for you; and that you may have no excuse for doing so I'll tell you plainly what it is. There was something like six hundred pounds in notes and gold in that poor devil's pocket-book. There is nothing to show who he was to anybody but me, who luckily can keep a secret, so I shall not tell you his name; besides, it does not signify. Not a soul but our two selves knows how he came on to my premises; he can never be traced there. I pass him off as my brother, and bury him accordingly. No one hereabouts knows who we are, so who is to say he is not my brother? Had not good luck brought him up to our hospitable gate at the critical moment, and had you not been the far-seeing clever woman you are, and not let him in, why he would have fallen down dead in the public highway and his property have been at the mercy of the first person who found him. They might have been honest or not. He would have been taken to the hospital, and of course his friends would have been duly informed of the sad loss they had sustained. Now, as it is, they will be spared this sorrow, because they will never know what has become of him. He will only be one more victim added to the list of mysterious disappearances.'

"Well, but," I broke in, 'his friends will make enquiries after him. He may be traced to our gate, and we be called upon to explain.'

"We may be," continued my husband, 'but it's sufficiently unlikely. It will be a cursed piece of ill luck if he is. Who is to trace him into this God-abandoned region? Under all the circumstances and by your own showing it is most improbable—nay, it is impossible.'

"Yes," I again interposed; 'but he will be advertised for and described.'

"Very likely," he went on, 'but the doctor and the undertaker are the only people besides ourselves who will have seen him, and they will have nothing to identify him by even if they ever know or hear anything about the disappearance. They will never recognise in my dear brother, poor John Smith, who died of apoplexy here in my house, under the very eye of the doctor, the forlorn man by the name of — (but I will keep that to myself), "who was last seen," &c., &c., as the advertisement will run. No; they will not know the name. It will convey nothing to their minds; how should it? For remember, the moment you so judiciously let him in and closed our garden door upon him, the lost man had ceased to be. From that moment he became my brother John; the real man was gone as clean out of existence, had as clean parted with his identity, as if he had never been! By Heavens! it's a stroke of genius on my part. I never guessed I was half so clever a fellow,' added my husband triumphantly.

"But," cried I once more, 'this is a very dreadful, a very dangerous game, as you call it, to play. It is absolutely theft, and worse—'

"If you cannot use better language," he said, 'hold your tongue; don't insult me. I tell you the money might as well have fallen into my hands as into those of the first policeman or pot-boy who might have found him. I want it badly enough, and if you don't betray our secret there is very little risk of my right to it being disputed.'

"But," I said, 'the watch, the rings, as well as the money—they may lead to your discovery?'

"Not at all," he answered, 'if they are carefully converted, and I will manage that. The notes are the only difficulty; but I can get over that too. If I go straight to the Bank of England to-morrow morning, directly it is opened, and change them into gold, I shall be there long before their loss is known, or, consequently, their numbers stopped. The young fellow perhaps will not be missed for a week; he comes a long way from here; I have seen enough to tell me that. We do not know what his habits were; we do not even know that anyone was aware he had the money about him. No; the more I think of it the safer the whole game looks. You have only to keep your own and my counsel and our fortunes are

retrieved for a few months, and we have nothing to fear. Ah, that's the undertaker, no doubt. You get out of the way; leave it all to me.'

"There was a ring at the bell here, which he went to answer.

"Ah, that was a dreadful night, and during the few days following I was nearly beside myself with terror. Of course the house was closed, as became the occasion. The funeral—a very quiet one—took place in due course at Kensal Green Cemetery, my husband following as chief mourner in the coach, accompanied by the doctor.

"No remarks, no suspicion attended so commonplace a circumstance, and when the ground had closed over the unfortunate unknown man, and when a week later a modest tombstone recorded the decease of the imaginary 'John Smith, aged twenty-three,' all trace of the dreadful fraud, save that which is printed indelibly in my mind, was gone."

As my friend reached this part of her story, she was a good deal overcome, and said she had nothing more to tell; but after a while I learned from her that the scoundrel had managed the conversion of the notes exactly as he had proposed. He slipped away from the house quite early the morning after the death, and almost as soon as the Bank of England was open changed the notes into gold, as he could do, by merely writing a name and address—fictitious, of course—on their backs.

He returned from the City with his little black bag, as he had gone, by a very circuitous route, so evading all chance of being followed, though, of course, there was really no likelihood of any one being on the alert. He got drunk in the afternoon, and confided these details to his unhappy wife. The unfortunate victim of apoplexy had probably not then even been missed. It was a cunning game truly, and boldly played out, and this is really about all I know of it; my poor little friend refused to let out any more very important facts.

Her husband utterly deserted her in less than six months afterwards, and she was left—well, that does not matter. To this day she knows nothing of who or what the unlucky young fellow was, where he came from, or whether he was ever enquired after; but though when she told me her story seven years had passed since the evening she let him in at the garden door, and he fell all but dead at her feet,

she very naturally felt—and no doubt still does feel—extremely uncomfortable when any chance reference is made to a missing man.

AUTOGRAPHIC PRINTING.

AUTOGRAPHIC printing, the name of which is now coming extensively into use, differs essentially both in its nature and its purpose from ordinary book and newspaper printing, generally known as typography. The latter, as all of us are aware, consists in printing from metal types, or from stereotypes prepared therefrom. Provided a fresh application of ink be used for each and every copy, there is really no limit to the number that may be struck off. If the public were graciously pleased to apply for a million copies of a periodical, the proprietor and printer would be glad enough to furnish the supply, simply by increasing their plant of machinery and the number of their working hands competent to the service.

Far different is autographic printing, where the number of copies required is always small, and, if possible, executed in the counting-house or office of a commercial or other establishment. Dr. Mark, editor of Debrett's Peerage, has occasion to send out circulars asking for information concerning any changes in titles, official rank, family, residence, &c. He states that he wants to be able to print off a small number by some quick process, and has tried all the "graphs" invented for the purpose. He draws attention to the great advantages which commercial operations at the present day derive from such handy contrivances. "There can be no doubt that but for the introduction of these processes commerce would be in a much worse condition than it now is, since it has enabled merchants to put quotations, market prices, &c., before their clientèle in a much shorter space of time than was the case formerly. They can have a sufficient number of circulars struck off very quickly, and in their own offices, up to the very latest hour."

Lithography has certain advantages over all other processes in regard to the production of a large number of fac-simile copies of handwriting, drawing, sketches, diagrams, &c., especially when steam printing-machines are brought into requisition to expedite the process, and colour-printing to enhance the artistic effect. But this is not the thing meant; it is a large manufacturing process, not a handy expedient to be managed by

one's self at home or in the counting-house. Zincography, a younger member of the same family, calls for a little notice here, because it admits of being practised in amateur fashion. Take a sheet of ordinary roofing zinc and a sheet of moderately fine paper. Brush the paper on one surface with a gummy liquid prepared by boiling a little starch, gamboge, and glue with water. When dry any writing or drawing can be executed on the paper with ordinary lithographic ink rubbed up with water like an artist's water-colours. When this writing or drawing is dry, the back of the paper is slightly damped with a sponge, and the face laid downwards on the sheet of zinc. The zinc and the paper being next passed through a small rolling-press, the paper is rubbed off by the aid of a damp sponge, and the writing is seen to be transferred to the zinc. Gum-water is passed over it, and ordinary printers' ink applied by means of an india-rubber inking-roller. A sheet of clean white paper being laid upon it, both are passed through the rolling-press, producing an impression which is an exact facsimile of the original writing. Many copies can in this way be obtained from the same sheet of zinc. This is a rapid and economical process within reach of any handy and intelligent person.

It is scarcely necessary to touch upon any method involving engraving, whether autographic or otherwise, such as relief-etching on zinc, grapho-glyphic process, or the production of autographic blocks by an engraving machine, seeing that they are too elaborate when only few copies are wanted.

For preserving copies of letters processes are frequently adopted which partake rather of the nature of writing than of printing. They depend on the writing of an original with a very intense ink, and a method of obtaining a few feeble copies of it. One or two copies of a letter may be obtained by many varieties of such contrivances, in which simple pressure brings about a transfer of some of the intense ink to very thin paper. In some instances, where a solution of an aniline colour is employed, as many as thirty or forty copies may be obtained sufficiently legible for most purposes, though becoming more and more faint as the process goes on. The intensity of aniline colours renders possible the production of results of this kind quite unattainable before the wonderful series of tar-colours were discovered. The methods of Mr. Pumphrey and Mr. Byford are of

this kind. The writing is executed with a strong solution of aniline colour on thin but tolerably hard paper; the writing penetrates quite through the paper; and by pressing a sheet of moistened paper against the back, the original aniline colour will set off on the damp sheet, giving a direct copy of the original. Fine lines, however, cannot be well reproduced in this way.

Messrs. Waterlow's "Multiplex Copying Portfolio" produces several reproductions by a process of this class. You write with aniline ink, and press down a damp sheet of very soft and porous paper on the writing. This soft paper absorbs a large proportion of the aniline ink, and itself forms a reversed printing surface capable of yielding a considerable number of direct copies on damp sheets of paper. The actual pressure required is slight; and the result, though coarse, is legible.

Mr. Bolas has recently communicated to the Society of Arts an interesting account of what has been done towards obtaining better results than by the above means. A brief abstract may be welcome in these pages.

Eight or ten years ago M. E. de Zuccato, starting from an idea suggested by Bain's electro-chemical telegraph, invented an apparatus for rapid fac-simile printing. Resinous varnish is applied to one surface of an iron plate; a tracing is cut into the varnish by means of a steel point deep enough to lay the metal nearly or quite bare. The plate being laid on the bed of a press, some sheets of thin paper, moistened with a solution of potassium ferrocyanide, are placed upon it, and a copper plate laid on the moistened paper with moderate pressure. The iron and copper are placed in communication with the two poles of a small galvanic battery. The iron soon dissolves at the spots where the varnish has been etched through, and Prussian blue is thereby formed, with which certain parts of the several sheets of thin paper become imprinted with the letters or other characters formed by the steel point. As the colouring matter goes right through the paper the writing can be read on either surface.

The theory of the method just described is quite sound, but certain inconveniences in the practical working lead M. de Zuccato to supersede it by another invention. In the papyrographic method a sheet of fine paper is saturated with a resinous varnish. When a writing, drawing, or device is inscribed upon it in ink consisting of a

strong coloured solution of caustic soda, the soda attacks the resinous varnish and converts it into a kind of soap. The paper is now floated on water, written side uppermost; the water penetrates the softer parts, causing the written lines to stand up in bold relief as ridges of fluid. The paper is now removed from the surface of the water, pressed between folds of blotting-paper, again floated on water, and again blotted off. By this time the remainder of the resinous soap has been removed. The sheet of paper in this state has a general ground impervious to moisture; while the written lines, being denuded of the resinous varnish, are quite porous, and form an easy passage for an aqueous liquid. This liquid is an aniline colour dissolved in glycerine. The prepared paper is laid on a velvet pad moistened with this aniline blue ink, sheets of dry paper are placed on it, and gentle pressure applied by means of an ordinary copying-press. The printing is effected rapidly, and it is said that many scores of legible copies can be taken from one stencil (as the varnished and chemically-prepared sheet of paper is called).

Stencils have for many years been prepared by using perforating points to prick a series of dots so close together as to present some resemblance to lines of writing or drawing. In the preparation of embroidery patterns, for instance, a sheet of suitable paper is perforated by a rapidly rising and falling needle point, worked by a treadle. Powdered colour mixed with resin is dusted over the little holes in the stencil, and the device is rendered prominent by the application of sufficient heat to soften the resin. About fourteen years ago Mr. Hoffman introduced and patented a portable perforating pen, the motive power being clockwork contained in a little cylindrical box attached to the upper part of the apparatus. Mr. Edison, whose name has now become famous for his numerous and highly ingenious inventions, aims at improving on both of these methods in his electric pen. The motor is a small galvanic battery, by the action of which a needle is made to vibrate up and down with great rapidity through a sheath or sort of pencil-case. The user writes with the sheath on black paper, which becomes perforated into a stencil by the rapidly rising and falling needle-point. The stencil being laid flat on a sheet of white paper, an inking-roller is passed over it. The ink penetrates through the perforations, and reproduces the original writing

with great fidelity. The process of printing in this way is rapid, and many copies can be produced in a very short time.

One invention is sure to grow out of another in practical utilities of this kind, each suggestive of some improvement in detail. Among other perforating contrivances following in the wake of Edison's electric pen is the Horograph, a convenient and portable clockwork pen. Another is the Pneumatic Pen, in which the motive power is a stream of air supplied from foot-bellows. A third is elaborate enough for using the electric induction coil, capable of giving a sufficiently powerful spark to perforate the stencil paper, which spark is caused to pass continually between a partially insulated metallic pen and a metal plate, whereon the stencil paper is laid.

But one and all of the numerous perforating contrivances above described fail to meet the requirements for easy, cheap, and rapid automatic printing of a small number of copies. They are too expensive, complex in construction, and liable to get out of order unless used carefully. To surmount these disadvantages is the purpose of Zuccato's Typograph. This is a very curious invention. The paper to be converted into a perforated stencil is laid temporarily on a steel plate, the face of which is cut like a fine file. The writing is executed by means of a point or style of hardened steel held in the hand like a black lead pencil. The teeth of the file-like plate perforate the paper wherever the point of the style exerts pressure, and a stencil well adapted to printing from results. A sheet of white paper is laid on the frame of a small desk-like press, the stencil is adjusted on it, and the upper surface of the stencil is made to receive a thin film of printer's ink by means of an india-rubber scraper; the ink, passing through the perforations, produces a copy of the original writing. The perforations are quite distinct one from another, but when the stencil is printed from, the dots of ink so far flow together as to produce nearly or quite continuous lines presenting a remarkably close imitation of the original handwriting. The copies are struck off rapidly, and Mr. Bolas states that as many as six thousand copies can be obtained from the same stencil. Mr. Zuccato has just found that calico receives the impression admirably.

Among the aspirants for honours in this curious field of invention is Mr. Pumphrey, of Birmingham. His lately-introduced method depends on the fact that when a film

of moist bichromate gelatine is brought into contact with tannin or salts containing iron, the gelatine is so far altered as to acquire the property of attracting a fatty ink. Plates of slate or glass are coated on one surface with a thin film of gelatine, and then dipped into a weak solution of potassium bichromate. All superfluous moisture being removed, a writing or drawing in ink is transferred to the prepared surface in the same manner as in zincography; and the paper on which the writing has been executed being removed, and ink applied to the plate with an inking roller, copies can be printed from it in the same way as from zinc. Practical men, however, still demand something more. They ask: "Can you give us a copying process that will not require the sheets of paper to be damped?" One reply to this query is in the form of the Hectograph. Here the writing is executed on ordinary writing paper with a pen dipped in intense aniline blue colour. When this writing has dried, it is transferred to the surface of a slab of soft gelatinous composition, analogous to that which is used for printers' rollers. The transfer is effected by gently rubbing the paper on the slab with the hand. In two minutes' time the paper is stripped off, leaving the aniline writing on the slab. Copy after copy can now be taken by laying dry sheets of paper one by one on the slab, and rubbing down either with the hand or with a soft roller. This method is rather extensively adopted; and so is another, something like it, called the Chromograph.

The combinations of the beautiful art of photography with various kinds of engraving and printing are so numerous that it would be wholly beyond our scope to describe them here. There is, however, one which is specially adapted for striking off a few copies of engineers' and architects' plans. The plans are drawn on paper or tracing-cloth, in opaque ink. This is placed in an ordinary photograph-printing frame; behind it is adjusted a corresponding sheet of sensitive paper, supplied by the patentee ready for use. The printing-frame being exposed to sunshine for about a minute, or to ordinary daylight a little longer, a chemical change takes place in the sensitive paper wherever its surface is unprotected by the opaque lines of the writing or drawing. By a further chemical process the original drawing is reproduced on the sensitive paper in blue colour on a white ground. Mr. Bolas speaks very highly of this method of producing one or

two copies of large drawings. "I should like you especially to notice yonder copy of a working drawing of a locomotive engine, the sheet of paper on which it is executed being over five feet long, while the fineness of detail recalls a copper-plate engraving. To reproduce such a work by hand would cost more pounds than this costs shillings; and even then there would not be the same certainty as to perfection of result."

The reader will have no difficulty in recognising the fact, rendered pretty certain by the descriptions given in the foregoing paragraphs, that no one of the new methods of autographic printing is likely to shut out the others from a share of popular favour. The list is a formidable one, comprising a variety of Greek designations, or designations made up of Greek syllables, that must have somewhat taxed the erudition of the inventors or their advisers. The multiplex copying portfolio, the electro-chemical autograph, the papyrograph, the electric pen, the portable perforating pen, the horograph, the typograph, the collograph, the hectograph, the chromograph, the autophotograph—a rare family of "graphs" here, to which it has been whimsically suggested another member should be added eclipsing all the others, and bearing the name of the "lick-'em-all-graph." All eclipsing will be out of the question when practical requirements are taken into account. We have first to ask whether the method wanted is one for producing so few as two or three identical copies or so many as a hundred or some assignable intermediate number; and when this is decided there is still an opening for choice in regard to the easy execution, the quickness, and the economy of the process.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXVI. RANF COMPLETES HIS DIARY.

"It was so in this instance. The small ambition which fired me at the first sight of the gold faded away, and a better aspiration took its place; a reminiscence of my own experiences brought to me a higher consciousness. The figure of the wealthy and uglier hunchback than I, who, when I was battling with the world, had summoned me to his presence for the purpose of sucking consolation out of my deformity, rose before me. The lesson I had learned

on the memorable night he introduced me to his guests for the purpose of showing me the power of gold—a lesson far different from that he wished to teach—I now took to heart. The words I had addressed to him I address to myself. Lip-service his gold could buy—heart-service, never; and I remembered how the keen arrow pierced his soul when I asked him where, in spite of all his wealth, was the woman who in her dreams would breathe his name in accents of love. In the light of this remembrance my exultation in my discovery took a worthier shape, and I felt that it was impossible that I should ever become the slave of gold.

“Not for myself did I rejoice in the gold by which I was surrounded. For whom, then? For whom but for one being, to whom it might possibly bring an added happiness? For whom but for Evangeline?”

“But presently an unexpected consideration intruded itself. Was it certain that the metal was really gold? Might it not be a baser metal, of no worldly account? I smiled at the thought, and the absence of any feeling of disappointment was a proof that I had gained a moral victory.

“There was, however, no other metal that would answer the description of the substance I held in my hand, and of the value of which, after the doubt had passed away, I was in my own mind convinced. For its presence in so strange a place I was puzzled to account; but upon reflection it occurred to me that some of the hidden rocks which lay beneath the sea along the shore might be auriferous. In that case, the mystery was solved.

“The wealth which met my eyes was enormous—impossible to calculate. I gathered a quantity of the precious particles from the crevices of the rocks, and placed it high up, out of the reach of the waves. It was evening when I first made the discovery, but I did not suspend my labour until night had so fully set in that there was no light to guide me—by which time I had collected as much gold as I could carry to my mountain hut. Not only the darkness of the night, but the sound of the waves, which told me that the tide was rising again, warned me to desist. I determined to pass the night on the rocks above, and in the morning to make a more searching examination of the wonderful cave. It was necessary that I should reach a place of safety at once, and I

commenced to climb the rocks. I was full of courage and spirit and energy, but I was over-confident, and, doubtless, also over-excited, for in an effort to raise myself, when I was about twenty feet above the level of the shore, I slipped, and fell to the bottom of the cave, cutting myself so severely and losing so much blood that I became insensible.

“In this perilous position I lay without consciousness until surrounding circumstances awoke my mind. Sweet voices were about me, whispering of the sea, of Evangeline, and of all that was most pleasant to me. The wild turmoil of living was over, and I was floating into an eternity of rest. An eternity soon to be broken by a furious struggle for dear life. The tide was rising in terrible earnest, and the waves were beginning to wash over me. Then ensued a battle from which I had scarcely a hope of escaping; but despair and the desire for life gave me strength, and although at least a dozen times I thought all was over with me, I managed to cling to the rocks and prevent myself from being carried out to sea. But I have to thank fortune for victory, for my strength was almost spent and my breath almost gone as a wave drew me outwards to the spot where the brown belts of seaweed reared and curled; quickly it returned, and by a happy chance washed me inwards towards the Cross, into an arm of which it mercifully flung me, leaving me for a brief space in safety. I took advantage of the precious moments, and before the next wave rolled into the cave I succeeded in climbing another foot or two up the Cross, and so inch by inch at length succeeded in reaching the beam on which the arms of the sacred figure were extended. Then fixing myself in such a position as to render it unlikely that I could be dislodged, my strength finally gave way, and I became once more insensible.

“There is no need here to describe the night which followed, its interminable length, and the strange fancies and images the roar and flash of the waves, whose breasts were illuminated with phosphorescent light, created for me. When the sun arose the tide was going down, and it was only then I discovered how weak I was. I had left on the rocks above the food I had brought with me, and it was almost by a miracle I was enabled to gain the spot; in this attempt I became still more sorely wounded, and it was with dismay I thought that many days must

elapse before I should be able to gain sufficient strength to crawl to my hut on the mountain. What distressed me most was the reflection that if I was absent for longer than fourteen days the record I had written would fall into Margaret Sylvester's hands, in accordance with the instructions I had given Evangeline. If I were dead I wished this to be done; but while I was alive, or certainly until I had fully determined, I desired that no person should share my secret. It was necessary, therefore, that I should arrive home (the mere thought of the word, associated as it was with Evangeline and the dumb animals I loved, brought with it a feeling of tenderness) before Evangeline had cut the last notch in the branch I gave her; and to this end it behoved me to nurse myself and not exhaust my strength in rash attempts to accomplish what was physically out of my power.

"Nature favoured me in many ways. The salt water helped to stop the bleeding of my wounds, and by great efforts I managed to crawl to a basin higher up the mountain, supplied with fresh water by a waterfall from the ice-clad peaks. The time passed wearily; inaction was like death to me; but gradually my wounds were sufficiently healed to enable me to move with some freedom, and, bearing with me a portion of the gold I had collected in the cave, in fourteen days I reached my highest hut.

"Everything was as I had left it; nothing had been disturbed; the book in which my record was made was safe. I was content and grateful.

"I directed my steps to the lower hut, where my birds and animals were, and long before I was within sight of it Leontine leaped upon me in unbridled delight. The dog licked my face and hands, and whined for joy. I am not ashamed to say I kissed the faithful creature. Such a welcome home was not to be despised.

"You are not alone, Leontine," I said, looking into the dog's eyes; "your mistress is below."

"Leontine understood me, and running before me, with joyous barks, and running back to express her joy again at my return, made Evangeline aware that I was coming towards her.

"She stood at the door, and at sight of me turned as white as death. By that I knew that the danger I had escaped had left its mark upon me.

"It is nothing, Evangeline," I said, in a

cheery tone; 'a mere scratch. I have been exploring the mountain, and had a tumble. Men can bear that sort of thing; they laugh at bodily wounds and hurts. Think of what Joseph bore for you.'

"I know," said Evangeline, with compassionate glances at me, 'but this is something more. You look as if you had just walked out of your grave.'

"It is not so," I said, with a gay laugh, 'and I hope it will be long before the opportunity is afforded me. There is nothing to be alarmed at; I am tough as granite. And all has gone well with you since I saw you? How many days is it since?'

"She showed me the branch; the fourteenth notch had been cut in it; I had lost count of a day or two. Joseph was at the foot of the mountain, she told me, and taking her hand I went to greet the lad. He, too, was startled at my appearance, but when I made light of my wounds and laughed at them, he laughed with me; and between us we set Evangeline at her ease. My animals and birds had been well cared for, and I thanked Evangeline for the faithful performance of the task I had given her. Then I drew Joseph aside.

"Have you seen any more creatures climbing up the mountain side?" I asked.

"Only you," replied Joseph.

"In the daylight?"

"No; at night. I have been out on the sea, alone, for the purpose of looking at you."

"I laughed; the lad had but gratified a harmless curiosity, and I was satisfied that he would not betray or deceive me, supposing it were even in his power to do so.

"Then you have discovered," I said, 'that I no longer climb the rocks in daylight.' The lad nodded. 'I have never seen the mountain from the sea,' I continued; 'would it be safe, seawards, to approach it?'

"It would be impossible," replied Joseph, 'for a boat to live for three minutes in the breakers on the coast-line there, they are so terrible and treacherous. It is for that reason I have been afraid for you.'

"If I slipped and fell," I said, 'and even then had some life remaining, you could not assist me from the sea?'

"Nor I," said Joseph, 'nor the best sailor that ever sailed the seas. Why do you risk your life?'

"I patted his shoulder. 'Some day,

perhaps, I may take you fully into my confidence; in the meantime, do not fear for me. I am fond of dangerous enterprises, and as for this climbing, there is but small risk in it to a man who can climb like a goat. Joseph, you can enlighten me. There is a woman on this isle of the name of Bertha. Do you know her?

"A woman who has lost her wits?" asked Joseph.

"Yes; to some extent, I should say. What do you know of her?"

"Nothing; I am forbidden to speak to her."

"Forbidden by whom?"

"By the islanders."

"For what reason?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Does your mother know her?"

"She has never spoken to me of her; no one in the isle holds communion with her, I believe; she goes her way alone."

"I had asked out of more than an idle curiosity; I had a deep compassion for this sorrowing woman, who lived a life of loneliness among those who had tossed her in their arms and nursed her on their knees when she was a child; and I had hoped to find a larger charity in the men and women of the Silver Isle than was to be met with in the old world. 'She goes her way alone.' Poor Bertha! But she has the spirit of her child to comfort her."

"Shortly afterwards a brig which periodically visits the isle cast anchor in the bay, and when the captain had concluded his business with the islanders I stood with him, by appointment, alone upon the seashore. He had executed some commissions for me, for which I had paid him in silver from Mauvain's mine, which I have the privilege of working, but shall work no longer, and I had determined, through him, to prove the true value of the discovery I had made."

"I pretended to be searching in the sand for something I had dropped, and he regarded me with an amused air, being used to my moods, and humouring them for the profit he made out of me."

"What are you looking for, hunchback?" he asked.

"For a man I can trust," I replied.

"What kind of man?"

"An honest man."

"Give it up; wiser than you have searched in vain."

"I shrugged my shoulders, and said:

'You make no pretensions to honesty; I must needs content myself with you. I would sooner trust you than one who protests.'

"What do you want me to purchase for you? A harlequin suit? Some tailor must take your measure, then."

"I did not take offence at his words; he bore a reputation for fair dealing and rough speech, for the latter of which I liked him the better."

"Come," he said, 'you can trust me, if you can afford to make it worth my while. Here am I, Old Honesty, for sale. How much will you give for me?'

"I took from a wallet I carried over my arm a small box, and said:

"Hold this a moment."

"He almost dropped it, its weight being unexpected."

"It's as heavy," he said, 'as lead.'

"Or gold," I said. As I spoke I looked about me cautiously, as though fearful of being observed or overheard. The captain changed colour. 'Step aside a little,' I said; 'no one but you must learn my secret. Now open the box.'

"His eyes glistened at the sight of the gold."

"Virgin gold!" he cried; 'as I am a living man!'

"I buy you, Old Honesty," I said, 'and you must keep my secret. Listen. When I first came to this isle the islanders did not know whether I was rich or poor; it was a matter of small interest to them, and as for the gold I brought with me—of which you hold a portion in your hand—it was of no value to me here. Nor did I think it ever would be—'

"The captain interrupted me."

"Stop. Your story must be told understandingly. You brought this gold with you?"

"Aye."

"And more as well?"

"Aye."

"Honestly come by, I hope."

"I hope so, too."

"That will not do for me, hunchback. Straight question, straight answer."

"Put your question straight."

"Did you come honestly by this gold?"

"Do you come honestly by your bread?"

"Yes; every mouthful of it."

"So did I come honestly by this gold; every grain of it. That it is mine never made, nor ever will make, any man the

poorer. But no man knows I have it, nor would I have any man know it but you. Is my answer straight enough ?'

"It sounds so. Go on with your story.'

"I did not think the gold would ever be of value to me here. But I have my fancies, and they have taken a golden turn. There is a maid upon this isle—Evangeline—growing to womanhood, whom I love, and in whom I take a pride—'

"He interrupted me again.

"Stop once more. When I called myself Old Honesty I was not quite in jest, nor was it entirely out of vanity or boastfulness. I am Old Honesty. Do you mark me, hunchback ?'

"Aye,' I said coldly, 'and I shall be able to prove you. If I had not thought you were honest I should not have been fool enough to trust you.'

"Well, then, I must be thoroughly satisfied before I work with you or for you. To profit by a thief's gold is to take wages from the devil.'

"How many thousands fatten upon such wages ?'

"I am not good at arithmetic. Sufficient that such wages are not for me ; therefore, my conscience—a rare commodity, eh, hunchback ?—my conscience, I repeat, must be satisfied before we conclude a bargain. You want me to keep your secret, and I will, if it's a proper one to keep ; not otherwise. Swear by the life of this little maid, Evangeline—as sweet a damsel as ever sailor set eyes on—that the gold is honestly come by, and I'll say nothing more.'

"Truly, I thought, this man of many words must have his way, and I took the oath with a clear conscience ; which for the time appeared to satisfy him, for he allowed me to continue without further needless interruption.

"As I was saying, my fancies have taken a golden turn with respect to my maid. I would not instil useless vanities into her head, but when she becomes a woman I would have it in my power to offer her what I would like to offer to one as dear to me were I in the old world instead of the new. My gold is useless to me in its natural form, but it may be changed for laces, silks, diamonds, and such-like adornments in which ladies delight. This is the commission I propose that you shall accept from me, leaving it to your taste, or better still to

the taste of some lady of your acquaintance, to make such selection as will best answer my whim and purpose. The reasons for my wishing to have this kept a secret between us is first that I do not care to let it be known that I am rich, and next, that I desire to have it in my power to one day surprise my little maid with a box of treasures likely to afford her pleasure. What say you now to my story ?'

"It winds up prettily, and I ask your pardon for my suspicions. I will execute your commission, and it shall be a matter only between ourselves. Do you know the exact weight of this gold ?'

"No.'

"He cried in astonishment : 'And you leave everything to my honour !'

"To your honesty—better than honour, which, as a word, has but a slippery meaning. The gold I have given you, however, will go but a little way in the purchase of what I need. Delay your departure until the morning, and at midnight meet me here, and I will give you more.'

"He consented, and at midnight we met again, when I gave him a small bag of gold ; he brought with him weights and scales (calling them 'armour for honesty,' and staring at me when I said that honesty needed no armour), with which he weighed the gold. Its weight altogether was twenty-four pounds and some odd ounces. The captain expected to return to the isle in six months, and during his absence I was not idle. I made hiding-places in the rocks for the gold I collected, and took great pains in making the descent to the caves of easier accomplishment ; but had I worked upon it all my life none but stout hearts, or those who had a great stake at issue, would have dared to venture it.

"The captain was not as good as his word. It was nearly a year before he returned, and I did him the injustice of thinking temptation too strong for him. It troubled him, too, he told me, when after his long absence, we met once more.

"The brig is not my own,' he said ; 'I am under orders.'

"I may ask you one day,' I said, 'to change employers. There are more unlikely things than that I may buy a vessel and offer you the command.'

"Time enough,' he replied, 'to speak of that when it happens ; I think we could get along together.'

"Then he asked me to accompany him

to the brig, and he would show me the purchases he had made. He unlocked a strong trunk which stood in his cabin, and drew out old laces and new silks and a necklace of pearls and diamonds. I took pleasure in their contemplation, and in my fancy saw Evangeline dressed like a lady in the old world; and as I thought of Evangeline I thought also of Clarice, and wondered whether she lived. But my greatest satisfaction was derived from the confirmation afforded by these purchases of the value of my discovery. Truly there was no bound (except the years which measure life) to the prospect before me. Nothing now was beyond my power; there was not a wish I could not gratify, and for a time I was bewildered by the possibilities which lay in the future. An observation of the captain's recalled me to myself.

"'Wealth is a fine thing,' he said, 'but what can one have better than happiness! You talk like a magician, but, if appearances count for anything, I should say you have not much enjoyment in life. Come, let us square accounts.'

"He was scrupulous in them, paying himself fairly, with the remark that sometimes honesty paid almost as well as roguery. I gave him other commissions and more gold, and he is now absent attending to them.

"Before I close these pages for good (or ill, as the case may be), I must make mention of a circumstance not connected with my discovery. It refers to Bertha. For a long time I did not visit the market-place, and one night I saw Bertha at the foot of the mountain.

"'I told you I should come and see you,' she said; 'you have been away so long that I thought you were dead. Why have you kept from me?'

"I replied that I had been busy and

ill, and she said I ought to have sent for her.

"'It is dreadful to be alone,' she said, 'when one is sick in body or soul. I should have come to you had I known. I should not have cared what they said of me—they could not say anything worse than they have already done. I am alone, as you are. Do you heed people's cruel words?'

"'No.'

"'Nor shall I. They have almost broken my heart—they shall not make me suffer any longer. See—I have brought you some flowers from my baby's grave.'

"I took the flowers from her hand; they were crushed and withered. Nothing would satisfy her but my promise to come to the market-place the following night. I kept my promise, and I left her, as on the previous occasions, whispering to her child through the cold earth. I am animated by the sincerest pity for her lonely life. We meet now every week; it has grown into a habit; and Bertha sometimes calls me brother.

"So now I write my last words. My last words! If it were really so, and death were to summon me this night, there are those on the Silver Isle who would shed tears over my grave."

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXXIV. "LET US DRINK A GLASS OF WINE TOGETHER."

SILVERBRIDGE pondered it all much as he went home. What a terrible story was that he had heard! The horror to him was chiefly in this—that she should yet be driven to marry some man, without even fancying that she could love him! And this was Lady Mabel Grex, who on his own first entrance into London life, now not much more than twelve months ago, had seemed to him to stand above all other girls in beauty, charm, and popularity!

As he opened the door of the house with his latch-key, who should be coming out but Frank Tregear—Frank Tregear with his arm in a sling, but still with an unmistakable look of general satisfaction. "When on earth did you come up?" asked Silverbridge. Tregear told him that he had arrived on the previous evening from Harrington. "And why? The doctor would not have let you come if he could have helped it."

"When he found he could not help it, he did let me come. I am nearly all right. If I had been nearly all wrong I should have had to come."

"And what are you doing here?"

"Well; if you'll allow me I'll go back with you for a moment. What do you think I have been doing?"

"Have you seen my sister?"

"Yes, I have seen your sister. And I have done better than that. I have seen your father. Lord Silverbridge—behold your brother-in-law."

"You don't mean to say that it is arranged?"

"I do."

"What did he say?"

"He made me understand, by most unanswerable arguments, that I had no business to think of such a thing. I did not fight the point with him—but simply stood there, as conclusive evidence of my business. He told me that we should have nothing to live on unless he gave us an income. I assured him that I would never ask him for a shilling. 'But I cannot allow her to marry a man without an income,' he said."

"I know his way so well."

"I had just two facts to go upon—that I would not give her up, and that she would not give me up. When I pointed that out he tore his hair—in a mild way, and said that he did not understand that kind of thing at all."

"And yet he gave way."

"Of course he did. They say that when a king of old would consent to see a petitioner for his life, he was bound by his royalty to mercy. So it was with the duke. Then, very early in the argument, he forgot himself, and called her—Mary. I knew he had thrown up the sponge then."

"How did he give way at last?"

"He asked me what were my ideas about life in general. I said that I thought Parliament was a good sort of thing, that I was lucky enough to have a seat, and that I should take lodgings somewhere in Westminster till—— 'Till what?' he asked. 'Till something is settled,' I replied. Then he turned away from me and remained silent. 'May I see Lady Mary?' I asked. 'Yes; you may see her,' he replied, as he rang the bell. Then when the servant was gone he stopped me. 'I love her too dearly to see her grieve,' he

said. 'I hope you will show that you can be worthy of her.' Then I made some sort of protestation, and went upstairs. While I was with Mary there came a message to me, telling me to come to dinner."

"The Boncassens are all dining here."

"Then we shall be a family party. So far, I suppose I may say it is settled. When he will let us marry, Heaven only knows. Mary declares that she will not press him. I certainly cannot do so. It is all a matter of money."

"He won't care about that."

"But he may perhaps think that a little patience will do us good. You will have to soften him." Then Silverbridge told all that he knew about himself. He was to be married in May, was to go to Matching for a week or two after his wedding, was then to see the Session to an end, and after that to travel with his wife in the United States. "I don't suppose we shall be allowed to run about the world together so soon as that," said Tregear, "but I am too well satisfied with my day's work to complain."

"Did he say what he meant to give her?"

"Oh, dear, no—nor even that he meant to give her anything. I should not dream of asking a question about it. Nor, when he makes any proposition, shall I think of having any opinion of my own."

"He'll make it all right—for her sake, you know."

"My chief object as regards him, is that he should not think that I have been looking after her money. Well, good-bye. I suppose we shall all meet at dinner?"

When Tregear left him Silverbridge went to his father's room. He was anxious that they should understand each other as to Mary's engagement. "I thought you were at the House," said the duke.

"I was going there, but I met Tregear at the door. He tells me you have accepted him for Mary."

"I wish that he had never seen her. Do you think that a man can be thwarted in everything and not feel it?"

"I thought—you had reconciled yourself—to Isabel."

"If it were that alone I could do so the more easily, because personally she wins upon me. And this man, too—it is not that I find fault with himself."

"He is in all respects a high-minded gentleman."

"I hope so. But yet, had he a right to set his heart there, where he could make his fortune—having none of his own?"

"He did not think of that."

"He should have thought of it. A man does not allow himself to love without any consideration or purpose. You say that he is a gentleman. A gentleman should not look to live on means brought to him by a wife. You say that he did not."

"He did not think of it."

"A gentleman should do more than think of it. He should think that it shall not be so. A man should own his means or should earn them."

"How many men, sir, do neither?"

"Yes; I know," said the duke. "Such a doctrine nowadays is caviare to the general. One must live as others live around one, I suppose. I could not see her suffer. It was too much for me. When I became convinced that this was no temporary passion, no romantic love which time might banish, that she was of such temperament that she could not change—then I had to give way. Gerald, I suppose, will bring me some kitchen-maid for his wife."

"Oh, sir, you should not say that to me."

"No; I should not have said it to you. I beg your pardon, Silverbridge." Then he paused a moment, turning over certain thoughts within his own bosom. "Perhaps, after all, it is well that a pride of which I am conscious should be rebuked. And it may be that the rebuke has come in such a form that I should be thankful. I know that I can love Isabel."

"That to me will be everything."

"And this young man has nothing that should revolt me. I think he has been wrong. But now that I have said it I will let all that pass from me. He will dine with us to-day."

Silverbridge then went up to see his sister. "So you have settled your little business, Mary."

"Oh, Silverbridge, will you wish me joy?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Papa is so stern with me. Of course he has given way, and of course I am grateful. But he looks at me as though I had done something to be forgiven."

"Take the good the gods provide you, Mary. That will all come right."

"But I have not done anything wrong. Have I?"

"That is a matter of opinion. How can I answer about you, when I don't quite know whether I have done anything wrong or not myself? I am going to marry the girl I have chosen. That's enough for me."

"But you did change."

"We need not say anything about that."

"But I have never changed. Papa just told me that he would consent, and that I might write to him. So I did write, and he came. But papa looks at me as though I had broken his heart."

"I tell you what it is, Mary. You expect too much from him. He has not had his own way with either of us, and of course he feels it."

As Tregear had said, there was quite a family party in Carlton Terrace, though as yet the family was not bound together by family ties. All the Boncassens were there, the father, the mother, and the promised bride. Mr. Boncassen bore himself with more ease than anyone in the company, having at his command a gift of manliness which enabled him to regard this marriage exactly as he would have done any other. America was not so far distant but what he would be able to see his girl occasionally. He liked the young man, and he believed in the comfort of wealth. Therefore he was satisfied. But when the marriage was spoken of, or written of, as "an alliance," then he would say a hard word or two about dukes and lords in general. On such an occasion as this he was happy and at his ease.

So much could not be said for his wife, with whom the duke attempted to place himself on terms of family equality. But in doing this he failed to hide the attempt even from her, and she broke down under it. Had he simply walked into the room with her as he would have done on any other occasion, and then remarked that the frost was keen or the thaw disagreeable, it would have been better for her. But when he told her that he hoped she would often make herself at home in that house, and looked, as he said it, as though he were asking her to take a place among the goddesses of Olympus, she was troubled as to her answer. "Oh, my Lord Duke," she said, "when I think of Isabel living here and being called by such a name, it almost upsets me."

Isabel had all her father's courage, but she was more sensitive; and though she would have borne her honours well, was oppressed by the feeling that the weight was too much for her mother. She could not keep her ear from listening to her mother's words, or her eye from watching her mother's motions. She was prepared to carry her mother everywhere. "As other girls have to be taken with their belongings, so must I, if I be taken at all." This she had said plainly enough. There

should be no division between her and her mother. But still knowing that her mother was not quite at ease, she was hardly at ease herself.

Silverbridge came in at the last moment, and of course occupied a chair next to Isabel. As the House was sitting, it was natural that he should come up in a flurry. "I left Phineas," he said, "pounding away in his old style at Sir Timothy. By-the-bye, Isabel, you must come down some day and hear Sir Timothy badgered. I must be back again about ten. Well, Gerald, how are they all at Lazarus?" He made an effort to be free and easy, but even he soon found that it was an effort.

Gerald had come up from Oxford for the occasion that he might make acquaintance with the Boncassens. He had taken Isabel in to dinner, but had been turned out of his place when his brother came in. He had been a little confused by the first impression made upon him by Mrs. Boncassen, and had involuntarily watched his father. "Silver is going to have an odd sort of a mother-in-law," he said afterwards to Mary, who remarked in reply that this would not signify, as the mother-in-law would be in New York.

Tregear's part was very difficult to play. He could not but feel that though he had succeeded, still he was as yet looked upon askance. Silverbridge had told him that by degrees the duke would be won round, but that it was not to be expected that he should swallow at once all his regrets. The truth of this could not but be accepted. The immediate inconvenience, however, was not the less felt. Each and everyone there knew the position of each and everyone—but Tregear felt it difficult to act up to his. He could not play the well-pleased lover openly, as did Silverbridge. Mary herself was disposed to be very silent. The heart-breaking tedium of her dull life had been removed. Her determination had been rewarded. All that she had wanted had been granted to her, and she was happy. But she was not prepared to show off her happiness before others. And she was aware that she was thought to have done evil by introducing her lover into that august family.

But it was the duke who made the greatest efforts, and with the least success. He had told himself again and again that he was bound by every sense of duty to swallow all regrets. He had taken himself to task on this matter. He had done so even out loud to his son. He had

declared that he would "let it all pass from him." But who does not know how hard it is for a man in such matters to keep his word to himself? Who has not said to himself at the very moment of his own delinquency: "Now—it is now—at this very instant of time, that I should crush, and quench, and kill the evil spirit within me; it is now that I should abate my greed, or smother my ill-humour, or abandon my hatred. It is now, and here, that I should drive out the fiend, as I have sworn to myself that I would do"—and yet has failed.

That it would be done, would be done at last, by this man was very certain. When Silverbridge assured his sister that "it would come all right very soon," he had understood his father's character. But it could not be completed quite at once. Had he been required to take Isabel only to his heart, it would have been comparatively easy. There are men, who do not seem at first sight very susceptible to feminine attractions, who nevertheless are dominated by the grace of flounces, who succumb to petticoats unconsciously, and who are half in love with every woman merely for her womanhood. So it was with the duke. He had given way in regard to Isabel with less than half the effort that Frank Tregear was like to cost him.

"You were not at the House, sir," said Silverbridge, when he felt that there was a pause.

"No, not to-day." Then there was a pause again.

"I think that we shall beat Cambridge this year to a moral," said Gerald, who was sitting at the round table opposite to his father. Mr. Boncassen, who was next him, asked, in irony probably rather than in ignorance, whether the victory was to be achieved by mathematical or classical proficiency. Gerald turned and looked at him. "Do you mean to say that you have never heard of the University boat-races?"

"Papa, you have disgraced yourself for ever," said Isabel.

"Have I, my dear? Yes, I have heard of them. But I thought Lord Gerald's protestation was too great for a mere aquatic triumph."

"Now you are poking your fun at me," said Gerald.

"Well he may," said the duke sententiously. "We have laid ourselves very open to having fun poked at us in this matter."

"I think, sir," said Tregear, "that they are learning to do the same sort of thing at the American Universities."

"Oh, indeed," said the duke in a solemn, dry, funeral tone. And then all the little life which Gerald's remark about the boat-race had produced was quenched at once. The duke was not angry with Tregear for his little word of defence—but he was not able to bring himself into harmony with this one guest, and was almost savage to him without meaning it. He was continually asking himself why destiny had been so hard upon him, as to force him to receive there at his table, as his son-in-law, a man who was distasteful to him. And he was endeavouring to answer the question, taking himself to task and telling himself that his destiny had done him no injury, and that the pride which had been wounded was a false pride. He was making a brave fight; but during the fight he was hardly fit to be the genial father and father-in-law of young people who were going to be married to one another. But before the dinner was over he made a great effort. "Tregear," he said—and even that was an effort, for he had never hitherto mentioned the man's name without the formal Mister—"Tregear, as this is the first time you have sat at my table, let me be old-fashioned, and ask you to drink a glass of wine with me."

The glass of wine was drunk, and the ceremony afforded infinite satisfaction at least to one person there. Mary could not keep herself from some expression of joy by pressing her finger for a moment against her lover's arm. He, though not usually given to such manifestations, blushed up to his eyes. But the feeling produced on the company was solemn rather than jovial. Everyone there understood it all. Mr. Boncassen could read the duke's mind down to the last line. Even Mrs. Boncassen was aware that an act of reconciliation had been intended. "When the governor drank that glass of wine it seemed as though half the marriage ceremony had been performed," Gerald said to his brother that evening. When the duke's glass was replaced upon the table, he himself was conscious of the solemnity of what he had done, and was half ashamed of it.

When the ladies had gone upstairs the conversation became political and lively. The duke could talk freely about the state of things to Mr. Boncassen, and was able gradually to include Tregear in the badinage with which he attacked the conservatism of his son. And so the half-hour passed well. Upstairs the two girls immediately

came together, leaving Mrs. Boncassen to chew the cud of the grandeur around her in the sleepy comfort of an arm-chair. "And so everything is settled for both of us," said Isabel.

"Of course I knew it was to be settled for you. You told me so at Custins."

"I did not know it myself then. I only told you that he had asked me. And you hardly believed me."

"I certainly believed you."

"But you knew about—Lady Mabel Grex."

"I only suspected something, and now I know it was a mistake. It has never been more than a suspicion."

"And why, when we were at Custins, did you not tell me about yourself?"

"I had nothing to tell."

"I can understand that. But is it not joyful that it should all be settled? Only poor Lady Mabel! You have got no Lady Mabel to trouble your conscience." From which it was evident that Silverbridge had not told all.

CHAPTER LXXV. THE MAJOR'S STORY.

By the end of March Isabel was in Paris, whither she had forbidden her lover to follow her. Silverbridge was therefore reduced to the shifts of a bachelor's life, in which his friends seemed to think that he ought now to take special delight. Perhaps he did not take much delight in them. He was no doubt impatient to commence that steady married life for which he had prepared himself. But nevertheless, just at present, he lived a good deal at the Beargarden. Where was he to live? The Boncassens were in Paris, his sister was at Matching with a houseful of other Pallisers, and his father was again deep in politics.

Of course he was much in the House of Commons, but that also was stupid. Indeed everything would be stupid till Isabel came back. Perhaps dinner was more comfortable at the club than at the House. And then, as everybody knew, it was a good thing to change the scene. Therefore he dined at the club, and though he would keep his hansom and go down to the House again in the course of the evening, he spent many long hours at the Beargarden. "There'll very soon be an end of this as far as you are concerned," said Mr. Lupton to him one evening, as they were sitting in the smoking-room after dinner.

"The sooner the better as far as this place is concerned."

"The place is as good as any other.

For the matter of that I like the Beargarden since we got rid of two or three not very charming characters."

"You mean my poor friend Tifto," said Silverbridge.

"No; I was not thinking of Tifto. There were one or two here who were quite as bad as Tifto. I wonder what has become of that poor devil?"

"I don't know in the least. You heard of that row about the hounds?"

"And his letter to you."

"He wrote to me—and I answered him, as you know. But whither he vanished, or what he is doing, or how he is living, I have not the least idea."

"Gone to join those other fellows abroad, I should say. Among them they got a lot of money—as the duke ought to remember."

"He is not with them," said Silverbridge, as though he were in some degree mourning over the fate of his unfortunate friend.

"I suppose Captain Green was the leader in all that?"

"Now it is all done and gone I own to a certain regard for the major. He was true to me, till he thought I snubbed him. I would not let him go down to Silverbridge with me. I always thought that I drove the poor major to his malpractices."

At this moment Dolly Longstaff sauntered into the room and came up to them. It may be remembered that Dolly had declared his purpose of emigrating. As soon as he heard that the duke's heir had serious thoughts of marrying the lady whom he loved he withdrew at once from the contest, but, as he did so, he acknowledged that there could be no longer a home for him in the country which Isabel was to inhabit as the wife of another man. Gradually, however, better thoughts returned to him. After all, what was she but a "pert poppet?" He determined that marriage clips a fellow's wings confoundedly, and so he set himself to enjoy life after his old fashion. There was perhaps a little swagger, as he threw himself into a chair and addressed the happy lover. "I'll be shot if I didn't meet Tifto at the corner of the street."

"Tifto!"

"Yes, Tifto. He looked awfully seedy, with a greatcoat buttoned up to his chin, a shabby hat, and old gloves."

"Did he speak to you?" asked Silverbridge.

"No; nor I to him. He hadn't time to think whether he would speak or not, and you may be sure I didn't."

Nothing further was said about the man,

but Silverbridge was uneasy and silent. When his cigar was finished he got up saying that he should go back to the House. As he left the club he looked about him as though expecting to see his old friend, and when he had passed through the first street and had got into the Hay-market there he was! The major came up to him, touched his hat, asked to be allowed to say a few words. "I don't think it can do any good," said Silverbridge. The man had not attempted to shake hands with him, or affected familiarity; but seemed to be thoroughly humiliated. "I don't think I can be of any service to you, and therefore I had rather decline."

"I don't want you to be of any service, my lord."

"Then what's the good?"

"I have something to say. May I come to you to-morrow?"

Then Silverbridge allowed himself to make an appointment, and an hour was named at which Tifto might call in Carlton Terrace. He felt that he almost owed some reparation to the wretched man—whom he had unfortunately admitted among his friends, whom he had used, and to whom he had been uncourteous. Exactly at the hour named the major was shown into his room.

Dolly had said that he was shabby—but the man was altered rather than shabby. He still had rings on his fingers, and studs in his shirt, and a jewelled pin in his cravat; but he had shaven off his moustache and the tuft from his chin, and his hair had been cut short, and in spite of his jewellery there was a hang-dog look about him. "I've got something that I particularly want to say to you, my lord." Silverbridge would not shake hands with him, but could not refrain from offering him a chair.

"Well; you can say it now."

"Yes; but it isn't so very easy to be said. There are some things, though you want to say them ever so, you don't quite know how to do it."

"You have your choice, Major Tifto. You can speak or hold your tongue."

Then there was a pause, during which Silverbridge sat with his hands in his pockets trying to look unconcerned. "But if you've got it here, and feel it as I do"—the poor man as he said this put his hand upon his heart—"you can't sleep in your bed till it's out. I did that thing that they said I did."

"What thing?"

"Why, the nail! It was I lamed the horse."

"I am sorry for it. I can say nothing else."

"You ain't so sorry for it as I am. Oh, no; you can never be that, my lord. After all, what does it matter to you?"

"Very little. I meant that I was sorry for your sake."

"I believe you are, my lord. For though you could be rough you was always kind. Now I will tell you everything, and then you can do as you please."

"I wish to do nothing. As far as I am concerned the matter is over. It made me sick of horses, and I do not wish to have to think of it again."

"Nevertheless, my lord, I've got to tell it. It was Green who put me up to it. He did it just for the plunder. As God is my judge it was not for the money I did it."

"Then it was revenge."

"It was the devil got hold of me, my lord. Up to that I had always been square—square as a die! I got to think that your lordship was upsetting. I don't know whether your lordship remembers, but you did put me down once or twice rather uncommon."

"I hope I was not unjust."

"I don't say you was, my lord. But I got a feeling on me that you wanted to get rid of me, and I all the time doing the best I could for the 'orses. I did do the best I could up to that very morning at Doncaster. Well; it was Green put me up to it. I don't say I was to get nothing; but it wasn't so much more than I could have got by the 'orse winning. And I've lost pretty nearly all that I did get. Do you remember, my lord"—and now the major sank his voice to a whisper—"when I come up to your bedroom that morning?"

"I remember it."

"The first time?"

"Yes; I remember it."

"Because I came twice, my lord. When I came first it hadn't been done. You turned me out."

"That is true, Major Tifto."

"You was very rough then. Wasn't you rough?"

"A man's bedroom is generally supposed to be private."

"Yes, my lord—that's true. I ought to have sent your man in first. I came then to confess it all, before it was done."

"Then why couldn't you let the horse alone?"

"I was in their hands. And then you was so rough with me! So I said to myself, I might as well do it; and I did it."

"What do you want me to say? As far as my forgiveness goes, you have it."

"That's saying a great deal, my lord—a great deal," said Tifto, now in tears. "But I ain't said it all yet. He's here; in London!"

"Who's here?"

"Green. He's here. He doesn't think that I know, but I could lay my hand on him to-morrow."

"There is no human being alive, Major Tifto, whose presence or absence could be a matter of more indifference to me."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, my lord. I'll go before any judge, or magistrate, or police officer in the country, and tell the truth. I won't ask even for a pardon. They shall punish me and him too. I'm in that state of mind that any change would be for the better. But he—he ought to have it heavy."

"It won't be done by me, Major Tifto. Look here, Major Tifto; you have come here to confess that you have done me a great injury."

"Yes, I have."

"And you say you are sorry for it."

"Indeed I am."

"And I have forgiven you. There is only one way in which you can show your gratitude. Hold your tongue about it. Let it be as a thing done and gone. The money has been paid. The horse has been sold. The whole thing has gone out of my mind, and I don't want to have it brought back again."

"And nothing is to be done to Green!"

"I should say nothing—on that score."

"And he has got they say five-and-twenty thousand pounds clear money."

"It is a pity, but it cannot be helped. I will have nothing further to do with it. Of course I cannot bind you, but I have told you my wishes." The poor wretch was silent, but still it seemed as though he did not wish to go quite yet. "If you have said what you have got to say, Major Tifto, I may as well tell you that my time is engaged."

"And must that be all?"

"What else?"

"I am in such a state of mind, Lord Silverbridge, that it would be a satisfaction to tell it all, even against myself."

"I can't prevent you."

Then Tifto got up from his chair, as though he were going. "I wish I knew what I was going to do with myself."

"I don't know that I can help you, Major Tifto."

"I suppose not, my lord. I haven't twenty pounds left in all the world. It's the only thing that wasn't square that ever I did in all my life. Your lordship couldn't do anything for me? We was very much together at one time, my lord."

"Yes, Major Tifto, we were."

"Of course I was a villain. But it was only once; and your lordship was so rough to me! I am not saying but what I was villain. Think of what I did for myself by that one piece of wickedness! Master of hounds! member of the club! And the horse would have run in my name and won the Leger! And everybody knew as you lordship and me was together in him! Then he burst out into a paroxysm of tears and sobbing."

The young lord certainly could not take the man into partnership again, nor could he restore to him either the hounds or his club—or his clean hands. Nor did he know what way he could serve the man, except by putting his hand into his pocket—which he did. Tifto accepted the gratuity, and ultimately became an annual pensioner on his former noble partner, living on the allowance made him in some obscure corner of South Wales.

A HOME HOSPITAL.

THERE are few large families in the country which do not enjoy the advantage of one member possessed, not only of common-sense, but of the faculty of expressing the same in vigorous language. Very often it is a maiden aunt, plain of attire, curt of speech, and independent as to means; who is the common-sense pythonesse of the family—the homely priestess of a common place Olympia. It is she who rebukes the romantic folly of young persons, who probably would listen less calmly to her remonstrances had they not expectations of inheriting the lands, messuages, and tenement settled upon her. Such a one is my Aunt Julia, who, if I were not too much in awe of her, I should be tempted to describe as a hardbitten female. She has a knack of snapping out unpleasant truths, just as she snaps up the midday mutton-chop. In a shy and furtive manner we call her Aunt Judy behind her square uncompromising back, but I at least know better than to assume any insolent familiarity in her presence. She makes very few bites of me in a general way.

Snap goes the cutting remark, just like the snap of her purse—very rarely undone, by the way—and I feel as if I had made an idiot of myself. Metaphorically, I wear a fool's-cap, and stand in the corner for the rest of the day. I know she despises me as a scribbler, and contemns me as a sentimentalist. Yet she likes me to tell her the news, thinking probably in the meantime of the rattling of peas in a wind-bag or the crackling of thorns under a pot.

A few days ago I came in brimful of a story which had excited my sympathetic and sentimental entity to an unusual degree. A very excellent artist of my acquaintance had just succeeded in nursing his only son through a violent attack of chronic rheumatism. For two months he had hardly had his clothes off his back, and looked the shadow of himself; but his boy had pulled through, and he was happy. To my frivolous mind this father appeared as a hero and martyr deserving of the highest honour, and I said so with perhaps more excitement in my tone than the occasion warranted, looking meanwhile at Aunt Julia for a grim smile, her nearest approach to any expression of sympathy. The square jaws remained as firmly set as ever, as my aunt closed a card-case she had in her hand with a sudden bang which startled me.

"How much," she asked "does your friend the painter make in a week?"

"He is not a very successful man," I replied, "but he makes two thousand pounds a year. Say forty pounds a week."

"Then your friend is a very great fool. Foolish!—indeed, considering that he has a wife and six daughters to keep besides the precious son, I may say wicked—a most perverse and wicked person."

I was thunderstruck. It had never occurred to me to view Sandy McCoyle in the light of a reckless and hardened criminal.

"Eight weeks," recommenced Aunt Julia. "Eight weeks at forty pounds per week is three hundred and twenty pounds the wicked man has thrown away while he has saved the thirty-two regular professional nursing would have cost him. He is, I make it, two hundred and eighty-eight pounds the poorer by his folly."

Now, nothing crushes me like statistics. I felt that poor McCoyle was not the man I had once thought him; but I determined to make one more struggle on his behalf.

"Just think of the devotion implied by such an action, my dear aunt. Think of a man giving up everything to be sure his

son was well nursed. McCoyle would not confide his child to the care of mercenary strangers. He did the important work himself, instead of carelessly handing it over to hirelings."

"Who would have done it much better, and got his boy round in half the time. Four pounds a week did I say? Why, the Home Hospital would do it for three, and get rid of the invalid out of the house as well. I suppose you know nothing about the home hospitals, designed to help poets, painters, and others who cannot be properly nursed at home?"

After inspecting the Home Hospital for Paying Patients established at Fitzroy House, Fitzroy Square, it must be confessed that Aunt Julia and those of her way of thinking have at least made an important advance in the right direction. It seems strange that such important machinery for dealing with sickness should have been neglected so long in this country. It is needless to open a discussion so wide as that on the general system of hospitals, concerning which my Aunt Julia has some strong opinions of her own. From better authority than even that of my aunt I am obliged to believe that a very great proportion of the gratuitous hospital aid and accommodation, provided by the benevolent for the poor of this country, is really enjoyed by persons who, if not rich, are able to pay for medical attendance. Of course, it would be absurd to suppose that very wealthy persons go when sick to eleemosynary hospitals; but it is not the less certain that both outdoor and indoor patients, who ought to be ashamed of their meanness, are not too proud to secure hospital advice and care under false pretences. I must confess that I do not lift my hands in horror at this new proof of the shabbiness of mankind. As Aunt Julia would observe: "You can't get people to pay money for what they can get for nothing." If any person of liberal mind doubts the large incidence of this rule, let him once occupy the position of one supposed to possess influence with operatic impresarii and ordinary theatrical managers, and his ideas will be widened very considerably. Why I—even I—whose theatrical connections are of the slenderest kind, am nearly maddened by applications from wealthy friends for free boxes and stalls—demands which mean neither more nor less than that I am to lay myself under such personal obligation as would seriously interfere with the freedom of my critical remarks, in order

that old Lady Hawkby and her daughter, that lean spinster Miss Buzzard, who have between them not a farthing under four thousand a year, may display their fine aquiline profiles and osseous shoulders in a box on the grand tier. Rich people are hideously shabby. I know men who draw a larger income from landed property than I can possibly earn, and who, instead of a large family, have only themselves to support, who worry me to death for the odd stalls, and front seats generally, which they suppose to be always concealed about my person; and the worst of all this is that I cannot serve them as I once did a bore of the first magnitude. At the period referred to I was supposed to know some of the secrets of the Turf. As a matter of fact I knew little enough, but it is quite enough to have a reputation of any kind to get the noble army of spungers and dead-heads round about one. This man made a lash at me, and asked me what would win the Oaks. I said I did not know, but thought—the first name that came uppermost. The animal won easily. My new friend was radiant, and at Ascot nearly drove me wild by following me about to pick up what he called “crumbs of information.” The crumbs must have made a substantial loaf by the end of the Ascot Meeting—my shadow declared me infallible, and the next week began to harass me about a number of forthcoming events. I made up my mind to have done with him, and selected for him thenceforth such animals as were not likely to run. A month of this treatment rid me of him forever. Now, if I could only send old Lady Hawkby and Miss Buzzard to the opera one night when it was burnt down, I might get rid of them; but fires are not so common as stalking-horses—mere quadrupeds on paper—and I despair.

Just as operative and theatrical managements are abused, so is the charity extended by many noble hospitals. In his work on Pay Hospitals Mr. H. C. Burdett tells a story instructive in its bearings on the establishment of such institutions. The writer has heard it asserted publicly, by a tradesman of large means, that he always gets the best medical advice for his family and himself for a shilling, instead of a guinea. He declared, and indeed boasted, that anyone so minded can get the opinion of the majority of the most eminent consultants in London, with less trouble, and in a less time, by paying one shilling to the hospital porter, than by going to their

private houses. He said: “Go to St. Thomas’s or Bartholomew’s, or to what hospital you will, apply at the out-patient room on Dr. —’s morning, tell the porter your time is valuable, and you want to see the doctor early, and give him a shilling. Thus, in less than an hour, you procure, not only the best medical advice, but the best medicine into the bargain. If you go to the private house of this eminent doctor you may be kept waiting two or three hours, and at the end of that time you may be told that no more patients can be seen that day.” The truth of the tradesman’s assertion has been proved to be accurate in fact by actual experiment, and, although the abuse has been cut down a good deal of late years, it still exists in part. Now, if a man is mean enough to save his sovereign, and to rob the profession and the hospital in the out-patient department, is it likely, is it reasonable to suppose, this same man and those who think with him will scruple to abuse the in-patient department when it comes to be a question of twenty, fifty, or a hundred guineas for an operation? Who can believe it?

It is not, however, by the act of plunderers like this, but from the ordinary conditions of existence, that persons of the middle class are perhaps worse tended than anybody else. As Mr. Walter put it: “There are only two great classes of persons who in sickness or any accident are able to obtain the best medical skill and the best nursing, namely, the very poor and the very rich.” At the present moment, in every district of the country, a pauper has at hand the well-regulated work-house infirmary. The agricultural labourer can generally obtain accommodation at the cottage hospitals, which during the last twenty years have been opened in many parts of England. Artisans and small tradesmen find in the general hospitals in the large towns of Great Britain accommodation suited to their habits of life and requirements, in which they can associate with companions of similar tastes. But a man of limited means and of fair education—a poor clergyman, an officer of the army or navy on half-pay or pension, a bank clerk, or an unsuccessful barrister—cannot pay fees to the best physicians and surgeons, and has no refuge except the common ward of the general hospital, in which he will be compelled to associate with ten or twenty other men of very different habits of life from his own. Such a one may be able to pay the ordinary

expense of a short illness, but then he must submit to all the inconveniences attendant upon sickness in private lodgings, or he may reside in a small house among a bevy of children. In London roomy houses are almost impossible to any but persons of large income. If a person of moderate means be overtaken by illness it is almost impossible for him to find the required quiet or isolation in his own dwelling. He is afflicted with a disease for the cure of which free ventilation is absolutely necessary. Unless money can fill his room with currents of fresh air, no price can purchase the remedy of which he is in need. Or he is so afflicted that perfect quiet is essential to his recovery, and he is maddened by the abominable noise which fills many parts of London from morning till night. The late Charles Dickens once graphically described such a situation: "That constant passing to and fro, that never-ending restlessness, that incessant tread of feet wearing the roughest stones smooth and glassy, is it not a wonder how the dwellers in narrow ways can bear to hear it? Think of a sick man in such a place, listening to the footsteps, and in the midst of pain and weariness, obliged, despite himself (as though it were a task he must perform), to detect the child's step from the man's, the slipshod beggar from the booted exquisite, the lounging from the busy. Think of the hum and noise always present to his senses, and of the stream of life that will not stop, pouring on, on, on, through all his restless dreams, as if he were condemned to lie dead, but conscious, in a noisy churchyard, and had no hope of rest for centuries to come." Yet this evil, thus powerfully presented to the imagination, is but one of the often and melancholy catalogue which illness in London inflicts beyond the natural and necessary consequences of illness.

From the purely monetary point of view the victim of sickness is sorely imposed upon. Expenses are materially increased by the extortions of lodging-house keepers. In the case of a bachelor or a spinster who occupies small suitable lodgings the case of the patient is made worse by the deeply-rooted dislike of lodging-house keepers to sickness, and the almost insane terror of a death taking place in the house. In addition to the downright cruelty experienced at the hands of the less scrupulous of this class, there is the hideousness of such nursing as the casual charwoman or lodging-house "slavey" is likely to be able to

render, and the nauseous wretchedness of the unpalatable and often-sickening compounds made to do duty for beef-tea and other light nourishment ordered by the medical attendant.

In many countries the sorrow of sickness under such circumstances as these has been reduced by the establishment of "*maisons de santé*," or private pay-hospitals of various grades. Such misery as that endured by Pendennis when confined to his bed by illness in the Middle Temple with no nurse but the drunken laundress, who acted as charwoman on ordinary occasions, has long been made at least unnecessary in the chief cities of the United States. Pay-hospitals have been established in many places, and pay-wards added to the eleemosynary institutions. The Massachusetts General Hospital has gone so far ahead as to establish a regular ambulance service. In New York City a new hospital, intended almost entirely for the well-to-do class, was established two years ago by Dr. W. H. Van Buren. The cost of this hospital, and the grounds which surround it, is estimated at one hundred and eighty thousand pounds, although the number of beds provided is but one hundred and fifty. There is not a single free bed in the institution, except those (very few) devoted to accident cases. The payments range from four shillings and sixpence a day in the large wards, to ten pounds ten shillings a week in difficult cases. The hospital has been most sumptuously furnished and decorated. The rooms for private patients have been fitted up with Eastlake furniture, Turkey rugs, and plate-glass mirrors. The halls have tessellated floorings, brass fixtures, small Axminster rugs by each of the beds, and electric signals to all parts of the building. The bath-rooms, lavatories, and other arrangements are declared to be perfect models of comfort and cleanliness. A feature of this modern pay-hospital is the recreation-room, in which the attractions of a conservatory are combined with those of an aquarium. A platform for a band has been placed at one end of this room, so that the musical tastes of the patients are carefully considered. So far the hospital seems to be fairly popular, and the wards continue to be about two-thirds full. An innovation has been introduced in connection with this institution, which is scarcely likely to prove popular with the medical profession. This consists in the establishment of a dispensary for out-patients, to which all persons, without distinction, are

admitted to the benefits of this branch of the hospital service on payment of five shillings a month. All prescriptions are made up at the hospital for one uniform cost of ten cents.

Pay-hospitals, or pay-wings to hospitals of the ordinary type, have also been established in Switzerland as well as in France, in Germany and Austria, in Spain and Italy, Sweden and Norway, in Canada and the Colonies, in Ireland and parts of England. In London also the pay or part-pay system has been growing apace. Provident dispensaries, as they are called, have been tried at Brighton, Coventry, and Northampton, and the pay or part-pay method has been largely developed in London at the Central Throat and Ear Hospital in the Gray's Inn Road. These latter efforts, however, are mainly directed towards out-patients—an idea differing very much in quality and degree from that of indoor-patients paying a reasonably liberal sum for nursing and maintenance. The first of the latter kind in London was the Sanatorium, or Home in Sickness, at Devonshire Place, New Road, described as an establishment for the nursing and surgical care of persons belonging to the middle classes. This institution came to an end by reason of too much business, for the demands upon it became so great that funds could not be raised to meet the extensions required.

It was determined that the new venture at Fitzroy House, Fitzroy Square, should not be attempted without a sufficient fund, and a meeting was held in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, on June 27, 1877, to raise the necessary capital.

A committee was formed, presided over by the Duke of Northumberland, and up to the first of January in this present year some nine thousand seven hundred pounds were received. The judicious investment of this sum proved a more serious matter than the raising of it, for the dislike to sickness seems to extend from lodging-house keepers upwards to the great lords of the soil. It was determined to begin operations in the west of London, and after the ground lease had been submitted to no less eminent an authority on the law of real property than Sir Henry Jackson, Bart., Q.C., Berkeley House, Manchester Square, was purchased by the Home Hospitals Association. It had been found difficult to discover suitable premises unless fettered by terms which would exclude an hospital. The ground lease of Berkeley House, however, was

considered sufficiently open, and the purchase having been effected, work was commenced. Then the storm burst. The tenants of property around Berkeley House rose like one man, and pointed out that what was rather a club-house for the sick than an hospital would become a centre of impurity—a nuisance of the most flagrant kind. Manchester Square bristled with grievances, real and imaginary. It was urged that the unhappy patients would come betwixt the wind and the nobility of the neighbourhood, and that ears polite would be outraged by unseemly sounds, eyes equally polite would be shocked by uncanny sights. The garden of the square would be constantly occupied by persons with bandaged heads and splintered limbs. All the seats would be monopolised by pallid creatures just clinging to a remnant of life, and who might possibly transfer their diseases to others before sinking into the tomb. The streets would be constantly occupied by funerals, and the pavement encumbered by undertaker assistants. Horrible shrieks would issue from the ill-fated mansion; sleep would become impossible to the neighbours; and gruesome sights might at any moment burst upon them. All this and more was said, but the association confided in its lease and held its ground. Then the ground landlord, Lord Portman, took the matter up, and the question was tried before the Master of the Rolls, who decided against the home hospital in a luminous judgment which, if pushed to its logical consequence, would invalidate the leases of half of the physicians' houses in London. The association had then no resource but to find a freehold house elsewhere, and purchased the freehold of Number Sixteen, Fitzroy Square, where work will be commenced on the first of July. The Managing Committee and the Honorary Secretary, Mr. H. C. Burdett, have, therefore, had many difficulties and delays to fight against; but at last, after infinite vexation, have accomplished a very good piece of work in setting Fitzroy House in perfect order.

The Home Hospital is on the north side of Fitzroy Square, and is easily distinguished by its neat and pretty appearance. The influence of the so-called Queen Anne style is visible enough. There is plenty of coloured glass and light green paint, but the sombre hues popular of late among decorators have been dismissed as too gloomy for a house the first essential of which is to be, and the second to look,

clean and light as possible. There is, on the other hand, nothing about it of that whitewashed hospital look even more ghastly than the most bilious hues. The aspect of Fitzroy House may be described as that of the home of a family of taste and refinement. It is cheerful, fresh, and clean, without being either stony or garish. A ring at the bell brings a man-servant to the door, and I am admitted into a cheerful well-lighted hall, and ascend a staircase arranged on that invaluable "palazzo" principle, which makes the stairs form part of a well or ventilating shaft for the entire house. It is, by the way, hardly from any special inventiveness in the Italian or any other mind that the great central staircase has found its way into the larger domestic buildings. Palazzo and manor-house, castle and hospital, owe their form to the old original laager of the nomad—the waggons ranged in a square so as to form a fortified camp. In the older country houses of England may be seen the process of development from a four-sided block of building surrounding an open quadrangle to the modern mansion. In the very olden time there were external staircases looking on the quadrangle and corridors connecting them, such as may be seen in the old coaching inns still left in England and in the immense caravanserais of Germany and North Italy. The next step, very distinctly marked in St. Giles's House, the seat of Lord Shaftesbury, is the roofing in of the quadrangle and the building of a grand staircase in the space enclosed. Thus the courtyard becomes a central hall, having communication with every part of the structure and supplying the means of ample ventilation. Imitative man has of course gone on building on these lines without reference to ventilation. That this view is correct may be gathered from the extreme care with which windows, especially in country places, were nailed or painted firmly down till within a very few years. The twin gospels of fresh air and pure water have not been preached very long. I can recollect when there was no such thing as a sanitarian, when ventilation was defined as "a mild term for an abominable draught," and tubbing, except on Saturday nights or Sunday mornings, was entirely confined to the wealthier classes of the community. I have heard it loudly asserted, within ten years, that many more people die of over ventilation than of foul air, and that perpetual tubbing

makes the human body painfully and dangerously sensitive to cold. It is therefore gratifying to find that pure air, pure water, a good light, and perfect sanitary appliances, characterise Fitzroy House, which has, in addition to every other known contrivance for promoting the health and comfort of its inmates, an apparatus for flushing the drains with an immense supply of water always on hand.

A short flight of stairs leads to the offices of the lady superintendent, Mrs. Bluett, who rises from behind an oaken writing-table to receive visitors, who have either come to London for an operation requiring perfect care during the patient's recovery from the shock, or who apply on behalf of friends or relations to whom it is found impossible to give proper attention at home. The tariff Mrs. Bluett follows by no means rises so high as that of Dr. Van Buren's establishment in New York. It has also been calculated that when the scale of the establishment is taken into consideration a low minimum rate would only secure failure. Under existing arrangements not more than twenty or four-and-twenty beds are calculated upon, and it has therefore been decided to fix the minimum price at three guineas per week for lodging, nursing, and maintenance; the patient being attended by his or her own medical adviser, who will be considered responsible for the professional care of the case. Here is an important difference at once from ordinary hospital management. At Fitzroy House patients are to be under their own medical advisers, except when they have none in London, when they may choose from a list kept at the Home Hospital of physicians and surgeons willing to attend patients there and living within easy distance. For obvious reasons the managing committee reserve to themselves the right of refusing to admit or retain any person as an inmate of Fitzroy House without giving any reason for such a decision; and all persons will be admitted on the condition that they are liable to be removed from the house at any time by the committee. It is in fact a Nursing Club with a committee vested with extraordinary powers and hedged round with necessary precautions. Persons suffering from epilepsy, lunacy, or diseases of an infectious or contagious nature are ineligible for admission, as are confessedly incurable cases, and midwifery cases; the object of the association being to help as many persons

per annum as the space at their disposition will admit of. The rules, to which attention is drawn by Mrs. Bluett, forbid expressly any patient from bringing into the institution or using any article of food or drink without permission, in order that the regular diet system prescribed by the medical adviser of the patient may not be infringed; and patients are not to smoke elsewhere than in the smoking-room. Fitzroy House has not followed one of its American exemplars in a curious item of tariff. At the transatlantic institution referred to, sufferers from delirium tremens are charged double the usual rate; but whether the increased charge is required as extraordinary remuneration for tending troublesome patients, or as a penal infliction on the too ardent pursuit of cocktails, is not explained.

The general tone of the interior decorations of Fitzroy House is white and light green. Considerable tact has been displayed in selecting wall-paper of such pattern that patients lying in bed may not be able to count the squares or sprays, and designs of an "altogether" character, as Byron said of after-dinner conversations, have been preferred to those of a stiffly decorative or geometrical cast. The wall-papers have moreover been treated in a manner specially adapted to the wards of sick-rooms. Every bit has been thoroughly varnished so that it can be washed down at will. The floors also are bare, and beeswaxed; in fact, there is nothing of a fluffy, "stuffy" nature anywhere in the house. The furniture is all brand-new, and of ash or pine, the light-coloured woods being a guarantee for cleanliness. So far as is humanly attainable, perfect purity seems to have been achieved. A very clever system of ventilation has been applied to every window, and cross-ventilation is secured by the best appliances. Finally, Mrs. Bluett, the lady superintendent, is herself a skilled nurse, and was lately in charge of the Teignmouth Infirmary.

Great public interest must attach to this first venture of the Home Hospital Association, being as it is the prelude of a scheme for bringing home the benefits of cottage hospitals to the unprovided middle classes of England.

THE TRIP BEFORE MY WEDDING.

I RETURNED from England to Philadelphia, where I was "raised"—to use the vernacular for once—in the summer of

187—. I had been away five years, and on chief reason for my coming home at this particular time was to see what I thought of Minnie Corleigh, and to find out what she thought of me. Minnie was about a fifth cousin or so of mine, and although nothing particular had ever been said, so far as I knew, in the matter, yet I was conscious, and so doubtless was she, that there was a sort of vague, floating expectation in our families that we should some day get married, and a correspondence vague enough also, had been kept up between us. The firm I served wishing to send a confidential person to the States, volunteered to go, and it was understood that I need not hurry my return, as—to complete the circle of vagueness—my employers had a notion that I meant to get married. In this they were at the time rather ahead of myself, but they proved pretty good judges.

I found on my arrival that Squire Corleigh and his family had just removed a trifle west—some fifteen hundred miles or so, which to my British-drilled mind at first seemed an appalling distance; but as no one to whom I spoke seemed to think that a few miles more or less was of any consequence, why I soon ceased to think it amounted to much, and as, very fortunately some business arising from my mission called me out west, I was very soon in Kansas. There I resumed my acquaintance with Mr. Corleigh and Minnie, and with Annie, Mattie, Polly, Fanny, Abel, Seth, Matthew, and Zachary Corleigh as well for the farmer had a large family. He was a big, tall, loud-voiced man—somewhat hasty, dogmatic, and overbearing, I thought—but generous to a fault, and evidently disposed to like me. As for Minnie she was the prettiest girl of the family and of a good many families around too and whereas I had gone somewhat disposed to be critical and fault-finding I fell plump in love before I had been at the farm twenty-four hours.

In the short time that I was with the Corleighs on each visit—I made several before the infernal trip I am about to relate—I grew to be excellent friends with all the neighbours for twenty miles round, and they all seemed to take it for granted that I and Minnie were regularly engaged. The only exception to this rule was a fellow who kept a large forge at the nearest village—one Lem Muncles, a hulking fellow with big beard and whiskers. I have no beard or whiskers: I

hate them, always did, and I hate them more than ever now. This fellow—this Muncles—struck me as having several objectionable features, one of which certainly was a tendency to thrust himself into the society of the Corleighs, and as I could see that Minnie was always a little confused in his presence, I resolved, on her account, to keep her out of his way. This was not so easy to do at the nonsensical feasts, picnics, and so on, they were continually having, but I did my best. What made it more difficult was that this person had some renown as a dancer, and Minnie was a sort of championess in that way; but as for his dancing—it was awful.

I had been to New York, and was to leave it on a certain night for Kansas, to pay my final bachelor visit, for it was half expressed, and half understood, that this time the wedding-day was to be fixed, and Minnie was to arrange for going back with me to Europe. Oh dear!—but I won't digress. I was pleased enough to present myself at the depôt, armed with my ticket for Denver, where Corleigh was to meet me, although it was a good distance from his farm, as he had business in the town.

It was night when we left New York, or Jersey City rather, and, as a regular thing I should have taken a sleeping-car ticket; but, as it happened, an old acquaintance started with me, and he, having to leave before daylight in the morning, preferred not to go to bed, and so I sat up with him in the smoking-car. He left at the appointed time, and I got a refreshing snooze of two or three hours after he had gone. This, however, was so little to my liking in the way of travelling, that I determined to change into the sleeping-car at the junction, where we were to overtake another train, and the passengers would settle down for their long ride. But I was only just in time; the ticket I secured was the last, and at least half-a-dozen subsequent applicants were disappointed; indeed, I only got mine through the enforcement of the rule which forbids a section being retained when only one berth is used, if any passengers are wanting berths.

I need scarcely say that mine was an upper location, and when I found Number Four, the seats pertaining to it were occupied by a lady and gentleman, both young, but hardly so much by them as by a multiplicity of bags and valises. I am a very quiet, I may almost say a taciturn person, and I scarcely liked to ask the young couple to move their luggage, but

waited patiently until their attention was drawn to me, when, on their fixing their packages more compactly, I sat down, merely expressing my thanks by a little bow.

They were a very striking, I may say a distinguished looking couple, both very dark, and both very handsome, while the lady's dress appeared to me to be simply perfection. I felt a great desire to enter into conversation with them, for I naturally pictured Minnie and myself travelling in like manner; but although I went out of my usual track to induce them to converse, I was met with a repelling silence, or with monosyllables that repelled even more. One trifling incident revealed that my new companions were of somewhat irritable temperaments. The only package I carried was a small black valise—a particularly strong and good one—and as this contained a book I was reading, I determined to open it. I had placed it, I thought, by my side on the seat, but on looking round I saw it had fallen among the lady's parcels, which were piled against the side of the car. I leant forward and picked it up, and was about to open it, when the gentleman angrily snatched at it, and exclaimed: "What do you mean by meddling with my satchel, sir?" "Yours, indeed!" I ejaculated. "I beg your pardon, sir; 'tis mine." "No such thing, sir," he retorted, "and I insist upon your returning it instantly." I turned to the plate on which my initials were engraved in order to convince him, but, to my dismay, saw that, instead of "G. W.," for Gregory Wilkins, there were "L. C. J." At the same moment I saw my own bag lying close to me—so close that I had literally overlooked it. I stammered out the commencement of an apology and explained how the mistake had occurred, but, with a frown far more dramatic than the occasion demanded, he almost jerked the bag from me. It certainly did seem incredible that I should not have perceived my own valise, and, feeling that I had been in the wrong, I determined to lose no opportunity of showing little attentions to them, and breaking the ice, if possible. In accordance with this resolve I made a point of assisting the lady with her shawl when the train stopped for meals, walking in company to the saloon with them, sitting at the same table, and returning to the cars with them; yet they did not soften much. Once, while sitting in the cars, the gentleman, after a long silence, suddenly asked me how far I was

going. "I have a ticket through to Denver," I said, "but know most of the stations very well, if you want any information." I smiled as I said this, to show that I should think it no trouble to assist them, but got no smile in return.

I was in no hurry to go to bed, so sat up watching our progress through the dark starlit country for a long time, taking my post at the end of the car, which was the last of the train. Oddly enough the gentleman from Number Four seemed disposed to sit up also; in fact, he was on the platform when I went there, but after remaining an hour or so, he retired, and I, feeling dull by myself, followed directly afterwards.

The next day passed away without particular incident, but I woke the following morning very early—when it was only just daylight, indeed—and found the train was slackening speed and about to stop. I felt anxious to change the heated atmosphere of the car for the purer air outside, but hate to disturb people unnecessarily. However, as I heard some one moving, I took courage and slipped down. The train stopped just as I emerged upon the platform, and, as I did so, I saw my dark friend stepping from it. He had evidently come out to enjoy a cigar in the clear morning air; so had I, but he gave such a chilling—I may almost describe it as a sinister—glance at me that I left him to himself, and merely sauntered about until the train started again.

We entered on the prairie that afternoon, and left behind us bustling cities and big hotels, to be seen no more for seven hundred miles. All this time I had not the slightest idea as to where my companions were going, but as they gathered up all their numerous packages when the train approached a station which I will call Peloponessus—one of the most miserable villages on the prairie—I presumed they meant to alight there. I asked them if it were so, and, in accordance with all their previous behaviour, received quite a defiant glare from the lady and a scowl from the gentleman, who said, "Yes, we are," in an angry tone, as though he would say, "And what are you going to do about it?" I half feared I had in some manner insulted him, yet this was hardly possible. I took no notice, however, and they left the train. As they did so a man appeared at the further end of the car, which had just become stationary, and gave a letter—I could see it was a telegram—to the conductor. The latter looked at it and

exclaimed: "Is Mr. Gregory Wilkins in the car?" Amazed at hearing my name thus unexpectedly pronounced, I rose hurriedly, and there sure enough was a telegram marked "Gregory Wilkins. To be delivered in the car at Peloponessus." I tore it open and read: "Wait for me at Peloponessus. I am forced to leave Denver on important business.—Quintus Corleigh." There was not a moment to spare; the conductor's cry of "All aboard!" was heard. I snatched up my rug and valise, and jumped from the train just as the engine-bell sounded.

Squalid and bare as was Peloponessus, there was no mistaking the road to it, for, beyond the few dull lights which twinkled from its hovels, there was nothing but the illimitable void and blackness of the prairie around; so I stumbled over the uncared-for road—if road indeed it were—and once or twice thought I caught a glimpse of some figures in front of me. Judging that these might be my late companions, I tried to overtake them, as had company would be better than none, but did not succeed until they had reached the door of a miserable, dirty-looking boarded house, styled in white letters so large that they were not only visible in the gloom, but seemed to dwarf the building, "Saloon."

As they entered I stepped in behind them. The sound of my feet attracted their attention, and they glanced round. I thought the woman would have fainted, she turned so deadly pale: she did stagger, and clutched the man's arm. He was nearly as pale as the lady, and seemed striving to say something through his set teeth; but at that moment the landlord came up to see what we wanted. As it turned out, this was a piece of wholly gratuitous trouble on his part, for he had nothing that we did want, and we made a wretched supper of black beer, whisky, and new bread. I fancied my fellow-traveller was drinking more than was good for him, but of course said nothing. Presently the landlord came in again, and said that with respect to sleeping accommodation he had none in that hotel, but that a gentleman in the next block (who was, as I found afterwards, a drunken German shoemaker) allowed travellers the use of his dwelling. "And there are two fine rooms, strangers," he continued, "the outern for you and your fixings, while madame can have the inside. "But we wish for a room to ourselves," said the gentleman. "Then you can't have it, boss." coolly returned the landlord: "the

gentleman's wife is very likely to come home to-night—she is out, peddling around—and if any other ladies want sleeping fixings there's none but them. So I expect you had better clear out." In deference to such a hint we had but one resource; we cleared out accordingly, and in two or three minutes found ourselves the sole occupants of the German gentleman's shanty.

It was a very uninviting place, with only a few articles of the rudest furniture in it. A long broad bench ran along each wall, and a dirty deal table was there; but bed or bedstead—in this outer room, at any rate—there was none. I looked dolefully round, then turned with a smile to my friends and was about to speak, when, to my amazement and horror, the man sprang desperately forward, throwing me, by the force of his bound, upon one of the large benches spoken of, and the next moment I saw the muzzle of a revolver within half-a-dozen inches of my face. "D—you!" he said (it would have been a yell but for the painful, almost bursting efforts he was making to smother his voice); "I'll spoil your grinning! You have tracked us, I know, but you have made a mistake. You are a little too fool-hardy to be here alone. Silence! or you are a dead man." To my still greater horror, the lady said, in her silvery, subdued tones: "Shoot him, Jim! It is our only hope, and I reckon shots are too common here for one to be noticed." The cold perspiration ran from me. I believe I should not have been so utterly prostrated had I known what it was all about; but the attack was so sudden and unaccountable that I feared I was in the hands of two lunatics. "Now," continued the man, "a word above your breath, and I fire. What will you take to drop the scent? I will pay well, but I will have your life if you are obstinate." "I may speak in a low voice, then?" I whispered. He nodded assent. "I have not the slightest idea what you mean," I continued, "who you take me to be, or who you are yourselves." They exchanged smiles of incredulity, and the man's face grew more savage. "We know what you are very well," he said, with a bitter smile; "not perhaps so well as you know us, but you are a New York detective." "A New— A what?" I gasped. "Oh, don't seek to waste time until some one comes," exclaimed the man; "your acts have been sufficient to tell all we know. You traced us to the cars; you

insisted on the berth above our own; you stuck to me if I only went out on the platform; you took up this lady's valise, under a paltry excuse, to make sure of her identity; you got up at dawn of day because I did, lest we should leave the car; you followed us to every meal; and now, instead of going on to Denver, you quit the train when we do and dog us still. What is your price? Tell us what you are to have, and if I can outbid the old wretch, I will." "Upon my honour—upon my life," I stammered out, "I know nothing of what you are talking about, or who you are, or who the old wretch is. I did not even know there was an old wretch. I have not watched you; everything has been accidental. I got out here because I received a telegram from the conductor. Here is my pocket-book: you will find my name in it, and papers which will prove that I am confidential agent to Prouts, Grouts, and Milberry, of New York and Liverpool." I handed the book to him; the pair exchanged glances; and with a sort of sigh he put up his revolver. "It is a most extraordinary thing," he said, "if what you say is true; and I must own these documents confirm your statement. If we have wronged you, accept our sincerest apology." "Yes; we shall never forgive ourselves," said the lady, who then began to cry; and her beautiful dark eyes looked more beautiful than ever with the tears slowly welling through the long lashes. After a few more words of explanation on my part, the gentleman said: "The best excuse I can offer for my conduct is to explain my position. The fact is, I have run away with this lady"—("Aha!" thought I, "a rich ward of someone's—lucky dog!")—"and by leaving the cars at this lonely spot, and travelling across the prairie to the north-east, doubling partially on our track, we shall get to my home, and throw the pursuers off the scent." "But with the precaution you have taken," said I, with a knowing smile, and a meaning glance at the lady's left hand, on which glittered a wedding-ring, "you need hardly fear any pursuit." The lady blushed and looked confused; the gentleman returned my smile as he resumed: "We do dread pursuit, anyway, and thinking we were followed, suspected you; and when you perseveringly hung on to our footsteps, even to this shanty, we naturally thought our position was almost hopeless. I had made up my mind to shoot you if I could not bribe you." "Yes, we had," sobbed the lady. It was a

dreadfully savage sentiment, but she looked prettier than ever as she said it.

It appeared they intended to start at day-break in a waggon which was waiting for them, and so we sat together till dawn, when we parted sworn friends; in fact, I had told him of my approaching marriage, and had promised to spend a few days with Minnie at his farm. It was indeed a lovely dawn, and as the pair drove from Peloponessus the train coming east drew up at the station. The lady, at a suggestion from her companion, I believe, leant from the side of the waggon and suffered me to kiss her cheek at parting. I did so. Then, as they drove off, I blushed perfectly purple to remember that all the passengers by the train might have seen me. One of them saw me, at any rate, for as I looked at the crowd which was hurrying from the cars to the saloon one form came striding towards me, and I recognised Mr. Corleigh. Delighted to see him, I hurried up and offered my hand, but, to my horror, he dashed it on one side, and called me a traitor, a wretch, a villain, a scoundrel, and—an epithet of etymology unknown—a “scallawag.” “Are you joking, sir?” I began. “No, you traitor!” he bellowed, recommencing his epithets. “You have succeeded in baffling us, but never shall you darken my doors again.” “But allow me——” I was just able to get out. “I will not, sir,” he shouted; “and I repeat, you shall never enter my house again. Give my daughter to a wretch like you! No, sir; I would marry her to a nigger with the small-pox in preference.” There was a great deal more of this, but not a word of explanation on his part, only abuse; nor was I allowed to finish a sentence; so I gave way, for his loud voice and excited gestures drew a crowd round us, and I paced the rear of Peloponessus wondering what second mistake had entwined itself around me.

Presently a quiet farmer-looking man came up, whose face seemed rather familiar to me, and he explained that he was a neighbour and fellow-traveller of Mr. Corleigh; for the sake of peace, he said, he ventured to think that I would not think of intruding on him, Mr. C., or his family, at present, or until they had had time to soften their indignation at my conduct. I must admit, he went on, that such behaviour as mine was calculated to shock them, although, of course, I could do as I liked. “But what have I done?” I naturally asked. “Well, sir,” he replied, “you

Phillydelphians and half Britishers mayn't think it much, but we do. Why do you identify yourself with such vile people?” “What vile people?” I echoed; “I know no such persons.” “Just so; from your point of view, of course not,” said the farmer, “but we think differently. You have associated yourself with the flight of Jem Gallett, the notorious gambler, and Mrs. Lucretia Cordelia Jendy, the wife of Deacon Jendy, an old friend and schoolfellow of Mr. Corleigh. You evidently warned them of the approach of that gentleman, who had received a telegram from poor Mr. Jendy, begging him to meet his wretched fugitive wife; and then, sir!—I cannot think what your heart must be made of!—you kissed the creature in purposed and marked defiance of the father of your intended bride. Oh, shame! shame!” For the second time at this confounded Peloponessus did the cold perspiration bedew my forehead, and I strove in strong language to impress upon my new friend how innocent I was, and what risks I had run; but in vain. I tried to argue that Mr. Corleigh might be mistaken in the person, as his schoolfellow must naturally be a person of some three-score, while this was a young woman of two-and-twenty; but he chose to consider I was sarcastic, and was justifying the “creature's” flight.

The only result of my earnestness was to succeed in turning him from being rather inclined to take my part, into one filled with the utmost contempt and dislike for a character so utterly indifferent to truth and morality, and he left me, saying he should counsel his friend Corleigh to take the most decided measures. And I suppose he was as good as his word, for I wrote very long letters to Mr. Corleigh and to Minnie—not daring to go near them—in which I set forth the whole of my action in the matter, and all the answer I got was the local paper with an account of the wedding of my pretty cousin Minnie to that preposterous lout Lem Muncles, the fellow with the big beard and whiskers who kept the forge.

I never heard any more of Deacon Jendy, or Mr. Jem Gallett, or of Mrs. Jem Gallett, as I suppose the deacon's runaway wife became, and I don't want to hear their names mentioned. Many a wretched and lonely evening have I passed, thinking of Minnie—but there, that is all over now. My story is finished, and I am very glad it was no longer. There was a little too much of it for me, while it lasted.

FALLACIES OF THE LEARNED.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE, in his *Vulgar Errors*, or, to give the work its proper title, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, enumerates a vast number of amusing mistakes which owe their origin, not so much to the ignorance of the people at large as to the strange wrong-headedness of individual men of learning. Classical writers especially must have been a credulous race; and even the fathers of the Church, whose business it assuredly was to keep clear of superstition, failed to exercise anything like due care in forming their belief upon the most ordinary matters. Often, indeed, when a costless experiment or a moment's thought would have been amply sufficient to prove the incorrectness of an opinion, these writers seem, out of sheer laziness, to have retailed without comment the most startling ideas and the most inconsistent principles; and, under such circumstances, it is not astounding that the giant-tongued physician felt called upon to set people right. No fallacy was so insignificant as to escape him, none so gigantic as to terrify him; and the result is that his *Vulgar Errors* is even now an interesting book, and stands at the head of all literature on the subject. Other authorities on the same topic are Ralph Battell, who in 1683 wrote *Vulgar Errors in Divinity Removed*; the anonymous author of *Vulgar Errors in Practice Censured* (1659); Thiers in his *Traité des Superstitions* (1679); Pierre Le Brun in his *Histoire Critique des Pratiques Superstitieuses*; Dr. Primrose in his Latin essay, *De Vulgi Erroribus*; and Fovargue in his *New Catalogue of Vulgar Errors* (1767); together with the various commentators on Browne, especially Alexander Ross and Dean Wren. Upon these, and the first three books of Sir Thomas's *Magnum Opus*, are based the following notices of some fallacies of the learned.

Seneca, Claudian, Basil, Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, and perhaps Thucydides, agreed in the belief that crystal is simply ice strongly congealed; and such men as Scaliger, Albertus Magnus, and Brassavolus assented to the proposition. It is, however, but fair to say that there were always opponents of this theory. Pliny denied the assertion, and in his company we find Agricola, Diodorus Siculus, Cossius Bernardus, and others. Of course, the test of specific gravity settles the matter at once. As for astronomical and geographical fallacies, their name is Legion.

Xenophanes asserted that the earth had no bottom; Thales Milesius averred that it floated in water; and almost every old writer has his own pet craze about the problem. A glimpse at the monkish map of the world which is still preserved in Hereford Cathedral will prove the unsystematic nature of the topographical studies in much later days; but such errors are too numerous to be more than briefly hinted at, and fallacies respecting crystals and precious stones afford by themselves sufficient matter for a tolerably long dissertation. To them, therefore, let us keep for the present. Pliny believed that the diamond will suspend or prevent the attraction of the loadstone if placed between it and a piece of iron; and, although the problem was one capable of speedy solution by experiment, he went on to ascribe the same remarkable property to the plant garlic. Eusebius Nieremberg, a learned Spaniard, had his own private craze. He imagined that the human body, left to turn as it would, would always point its head to the north; and it is hard to understand how this and most of the other fallacies connected with the loadstone escaped detection by experiment. Lælius Bisciola, for instance, asserted that one ounce of iron added to ten ounces of loadstone would only produce a total weight of ten ounces; and Apollonius and Beda join in testifying that there are certain loadstones which attract only at night; while other learned authorities affirm that the mineral in question, when burnt, gives off an unbearable stench, and that, if preserved in certain salts, it has the power of attracting gold, even out of the deepest wells.

That the diamond may be broken or softened by the blood of a goat was at one time a matter of almost universal belief. Pliny, Solinus, Albertus, Isidore, Augustine, and Cyprian all express their faith in it; and the fallacy has certainly the advantage of being at least a poetical one, for it is undoubtedly based on the Christian principle that the blood of Christ, the sin-offering, can soften the hardest heart. Yet its symbolic meaning appears to have been completely lost sight of by its later advocates; and Alexander Ross, while agreeing with Browne that goat's blood does not affect the diamond, hints that nevertheless it does indubitably soften some kinds of adamant—an idea no less indefinite than unfounded.

It may astonish some people to learn how wrong-headed even Aristotle was in

similar matters. He asserted, among other things, that a vessel full of ashes will contain as much water as it will when empty; and in another passage he stated, with perhaps a greater show of reason, that bolts and arrows grow red-hot in the course of rapid flight through the air. This, however, is, we know, incorrect. A candle may be fired from a gun so as to pass through a board; and, although a leaden bullet or an iron ball may splash and even melt upon impact on a hard substance, it is not the motion but the sudden arrest of that motion which generates the necessary amount of heat. Another common article of belief with ancient sages was that coral is soft under water, and only hardens when exposed to the air. Browne easily confuted the adherents of this view, but fell into equal error when he affirmed coral to be a plant. The amethyst was said to prevent drunkenness; a diamond placed beneath a wife's pillow was supposed to betray her infidelity; the sapphire was considered a preservative against enchantments; and the smoke of an agate was relied on to avert a tempest. Most of the writers of the middle ages believed that cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmegs are the produce of the same tree; that the bay, the fig-tree, eagles, and sealskins afford protection from lightning; and that the use of bitter almonds is an effectual guard against intoxication. Two fallacies are attached to the herb basil. *Hollerius* declared that it propagated scorpions; while *Oribasius*, on the other hand, asserted that it was an antidote to the sting of those insects. One great authority, quoted by Browne, states that an ivy cup has the property of separating wine from water, the former soaking through, but the latter remaining. Sir Thomas seriously tried the experiment, but in vain; whereupon a hostile critic ascribed the failure to the "weakness of our racked wines." Another sage wrote that cucumbers had the power of killing by their natural cold; and yet another stated that no snake can endure the shade of an ash-tree.

Ctesias, the Cnidian, who lived A.D. 380, reported that the elephant has no joints, that consequently it is unable to lie down, and is in the habit of sleeping as it rests against a tree in its native forest. This peculiarity, he stated, is taken advantage of by the hunters, who cut down the tree, whereupon the huge beast rolls helplessly over on its back, and is easily captured or dispatched. The real facts are that elephants often sleep standing, and that the wilder

ones seldom lie down. Yet tame elephants as often sleep lying as standing. *Christophorus à Costa* declared that elephants have been known to speak; and this question is one which even Sir Thomas Browne never ventured to contradict—he thought it might be possible.

Many authorities united in believing that a badger's right legs are longer than his left, and the unfounded fallacy yet lingers in some parts of England, as does also a better known one connected with the bear. *Pliny*, *Ælian*, and *Ovid* all testify that this animal actually licks her newly-born cubs into shape; that, in fact, at their birth her young are completely unformed. With regard to the wolf there is a common superstition to the effect that the first sight of the animal strikes a man hoarse or dumb. This fallacy has given rise to the Latin expression, "*Lupus est in fabula*," used when a hiatus occurs in conversation, and to the French proverb, "*Il a vu le loup*." But no superstition concerning animals is more widely spread than that certain specimens—notably the crow, chough, raven, and deer—live for fabulous lengths of time. *Hesiod* and *Ælian* adopted it, and *Hierocles*, it may be, lightly satirised it when he wrote of his Simple Simon who, hearing that a raven would live for a hundred years, bought one that he might make the experiment and watch the result.

Alexander Ross, who, although he was no great sage, could, upon occasion, look at all things from a common-sense point of view, implicitly believed that an old man might, by some unchronicled means, restore his youth; but that idea was very general in his time, and even later. A similar fallacy concerning the kingfisher is even stranger. It was asserted that the dead bird moults and renews its feathers. Browne does not seem to have made any experiments to this effect; but he conducted some very elaborate ones to disprove that the kingfisher hung up by its bill will always turn its face to the wind. It is harder to account for such beliefs as this than for those in dragons, griffins, and other fabulous monsters, the existence of which was only doubted within comparatively recent times, except by very few. *Ælian*, *Mela*, and *Herodotus* with one voice testify to the griffin, though *Pliny* and *Albertus Magnus* are incredulous. *Ross*, with his usual respect for the ancients, was loath to run contrary to the old opinions. He thought that the griffin and phoenix existed in his day: but he suggested that these monsters

probably hid themselves for fear of being killed and eaten. And as for the phoenix, even Cyril, Epiphanius, Ambrose, and Tertullian believed in the marvellous bird—strange satire on ecclesiastical profundity. Aristotle, Ælian, Nicander, and Pliny all agreed with the fabulous stories of the salamander's liking for fire, though Dioscorides laughed at it; and many old writers seem to have been persuaded that asbestos is nothing more or less than salamander's wool. Again, Nicander and others credited the existence of the amphiscœna, or two-headed serpent; and even Ælian could stomach this, though he disallowed the hydra and the chimæra.

The vulgar error that moles are blind is derived from the statements of Aristotle and Pliny; but there is actually in Greece an indigenous animal, known as the rat-mole, which is blind. Alexander Ross innocently expresses his conviction that the eyes of our English mole are for ornament and nothing else; and in connection with this matter even the wary Sir Thomas Browne commits himself by declaring that no animal can possess more than two eyes. Pliny, Solinus, and Ovid held that the chameleon lives entirely upon air. Similarly general was the idea that the ostrich is able to digest iron. Plato appears to be primarily responsible for the notion that swans sing very sweetly before death; and the idea took deep root, although Pliny denied it, as he did the belief that storks will live only in republics and free states. There was a prevalent idea that the lion is afraid of the cock; and Camerarius, to contradict it, cited the case of a lion springing into a farm-yard and devouring all the poultry. Whereupon Ross confidently averred that the lion in question must have been mad. Such wrong-headed reasoning as this it was that kept alive these and similar fallacies in the brains of men who ought to have known better.

worse than the general run of captains, was welcome when he made his appearance. The second cast its anchor for the first time in the beautiful waters which surrounded the isle, and its captain was a stranger to the inhabitants, who were not in the habit of falling in love at first sight.

It was not, therefore, without uneasiness that the islanders watched the approach of the second vessel; they valued their privacy, and those among them best able to judge were aware that in their seclusion lay an inestimable blessing. It had never occurred that these white-winged visitors from the old world trod so closely upon each other's heels. There had always been a lapse of several months between the visits, and—especially to the older residents—any deviation from regular custom was seldom agreeable. But apart from these considerations, there was another reason why the approach of the strange vessel was observed with anxiety.

The captain with whom they were acquainted, and who had only just left them, had brought them news of a fearful convulsion in the country of the old world of which he was a citizen. A terrible crisis had occurred in the history of his land. The people had risen upon their masters, and had hurled them from their high places; the lives of those who made and administered the laws were jeopardised, and in many instances had been sacrificed by the wild passions of a bloody-minded populace, whose worst impulses were brought into play; all decency, restraint, and order were cast aside; religion was mocked at and its priests insulted; mad ideas of equality were being promulgated, and visionaries and fanatics, and those whose warped and astute intellects could use these for their purpose, declared the time had come for a new distribution of property. To lead the way to this, the prisons had been thrown open, and the vilest criminals had been let loose upon society, one or two unfortunate miscarriages of justice being held sufficient for the flowing of this tide; old rights were disregarded, and insanely-flattering theories were dangled before weak and ignorant masses, inflaming them with visions of an impossible Utopia. The streets were red with blood, and decent people were afraid to venture out of their houses. Wealth and wine and fine linen were henceforth to be the property of all, especially the property of those who did not own them. The millennium of the

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXVII. MAUVAIN RETURNS TO THE SILVER ISLE.

IN the year 1848 an unusual circumstance occurred in the Silver Isle. Within the space of a fortnight two vessels anchored in the bay. The first was a regular trader to the place, and had visited it on and off for half-a-dozen years; its captain was well known, and being no

wretched and needy had arrived. The rich might go hang. There were to be no more rich—except the poor. It was the era of topsy-turveydom in property and morals. By a common process of reasoning (which now and again in social convulsions glares for a moment, to be extinguished almost instantly by a better light), to be born rich was looked upon as a crime; and success, also, was a wrong to those who struggled or idled (particularly to the latter) and who had never reaped fair harvest.

More than ever grateful were the islanders for the peace and order which reigned in their land, and which had never yet been overturned. The pictures drawn by their friend awoke their compassion for him, and they proposed that he should stay among them; he declined.

"I have duties elsewhere," he said; "I must look after my wife and children. We must stand by our homesteads."

And then again he descanted upon the misfortunes into which his country was plunged, and harrowed the hearts of the islanders with his stories.

"I never believed in the divine right of kings," he said, "but a ship must have its captain, call him what you will, king or president or any other name you choose; and the captain and his officers must know their business, or their vessel will get into the rapids or on the rocks. You have reason to thank Heaven that you are free from such fevers as I have described. You can live your lives in peace and security, and can enjoy the fruits of your labour. These wretches would wrest them not only from you but from your children. You are not surrounded by a pack of mongrels ready to snatch the bone from your mouth. Right is right, and there is rich man's right as well as poor man's right. That is what some do not or will not understand. At this moment hundreds of innocent persons are hiding in cellars and garrets and caves, awaiting in despair the opportunity to escape from the unreasoning fury of their fellow-creatures. It makes my blood boil to think of it. So you would give me welcome among you?"

"Yes," they answered, "you and yours."

"Well, I can but thank you, and if necessity drives I will take advantage of your offer. It is no small temptation to a man to be offered the opportunity of bringing up his children in virtue and peace."

So the captain, whose name was Ranhael.

bade them farewell, and took his departure.

Happily, thought the islanders, our isle is but little known, and they almost regretted that a ship had ever visited it; for although they were not inhospitable, they believed it would be an evil day for them upon which men with new ideas came among them. What more did men want than enough? To work, to rest, to thank Heaven for health and food, to live in virtue and cleanliness, to enjoy what Nature with liberal hand held out to them—this was their gospel of earth, to which they added the spiritual Gospel of trust and hope in God. What greater calamity could happen to them than for this happy state to be disturbed? Therefore it was when, within three days after the departure of the first vessel, a second made its appearance over the distant sea-line, its white sails swelling to the Silver Isle, that its approach was viewed with feelings of uneasiness.

"What brings this stranger to the Silver Isle?" said the islanders, and they spoke of sending out a boat to enquire the business of the unexpected visitor.

On the deck of the vessel stood two men, close to the bulwarks, their eyes fixed upon the land. One was a man in the prime of life, the other a man whose hair was fast growing white. They were both handsome and distinguished; but there was a worn look in their eyes, as though they had passed through some recent trouble. For some time they gazed in silence; then the younger of the men spoke.

"It seems but yesterday!"

"Eh?" cried his companion, who did not hear the observation, and thought it addressed to him.

"It seems but yesterday!" repeated the younger man.

"Since when?"

"Since I visited this happy isle. I passed some delicious moments lying on tumbled hay in a field where men and women were working; I thought I was in Arcadia; and I remember well the walk to the market-place, over the hill-slopes and between hedges of barbery and roses. I can trace the perfume of syringa at this moment."

"You were ever a rhapsodist. This isle is a happy one if happiness is to be found in stagnation. I was surfeited with it. When I lived here—how many years ago?—a lifetime, it seems—I was fit to die of lassitude. But time brings changes." He frowned at this, thinking of the change

time had brought to him. He was a fugitive when he first sought shelter within the peaceful land ; he was a fugitive now ; but, then, the future, an earthly future, was before him ; he was scarcely in his prime ; now, his hair was whitening, and nature was whispering, "Your time is coming ; the earth is waiting for you." He brushed these thoughts away ; it was his habit to rid himself of unpleasant reflection, and to this may be ascribed the circumstance that, though he was old enough for them, there were but few wrinkles in his handsome face. "It is to be hoped," he continued, "that the inhabitants have grown more amenable to reason."

"To what end, Mauvain ?"

"To the end of a proper enjoyment of life."

"According to your understanding of it."

"It is not to be doubted," said Mauvain, "who is the better judge, they or I."

"For my part, I never had the inclination to teach other creatures how to enjoy, believing they had promptings of their own. I regard Nature as perfect ; I have no doubt you find imperfections in her. It appeared to me that the inhabitants of the Silver Isle had a fair enjoyment of life."

"They may have, in their way."

"Then the end is served ; a thankless task to try and improve upon it."

"One must do something with his days. You are happily constituted ; the flight of a butterfly is food enough for your indolent soul ; but I cannot lie down and dream the hours away."

"If my impressions are correct, the men of the isle have wills of their own."

"Then," said Mauvain, with a smile, "we must try and convince the women."

The younger man smiled also, but the smile almost instantly died from his lips. "You had a larger experience than I," he said ; "mine was but a fleeting view, and when beauty is first presented to me something within me prevents me from staring it out of countenance. The women of the isle are fair."

"Very fair ; I am afraid when I lived here I scarcely did them justice."

"Never too late to repair an error, Mauvain."

"It shall be my aim."

"Mauvain, I will make a confession to you. I have not been fortunate with women hitherto."

"It is at once a confession and a revelation. Your friends think otherwise."

"My friends flatter me ; I never merited their good opinion, being in that respect like many other luckier dogs than myself, who are better thought of than they deserve. Do you know, Mauvain, there has ever been in my heart an unsatisfied longing ? The days have glided on smoothly enough. There have been laughter, music, flowers, fair and gracious women, sweet protestations, and sometimes sweeter tears, old wine and young beauty in their full ripeness. These should be sufficient for a man, and are, for most ; they have not been for me. Sometimes the flowers have faded in my hand or as I inhaled their fragrance ; sometimes the music jarred or I heard in it the discordant laughter of a disappointed hope ; sometimes I saw wrinkles in the fairest face. They have not brought to me what I have yearned for in my heart of hearts."

"What have you yearned for, Harold ? Describe it."

"Difficult, if not impossible, for it springs not so much from others as from an unsatisfied longing of the soul. The wind has whispered it, the leaves have murmured it ; I have seen it in the gloaming. The fault is in myself that I have never loved."

"You are poetising, Harold, as I have heard you do a hundred times before, or you have lied terribly."

"If I must choose between the two, I have lied terribly. One must say something. 'Am I fair ?' 'You are beautiful.' 'Do you love me ?' 'With all my soul.' 'Swear that you will never love another !' 'I swear it !' Is not that the way the comedy goes ? I fall back upon a morsel of your own philosophy—one must do something with his days—and though, unlike you (to be unlike you in anything is to be at a disadvantage), I am fond of dreaming, the world will not always give you leisure. A bouquet is to be bought, a white wrist is held out for the fastening of a glove, a note has to be read and answered. I am continuing the comedy, Mauvain. Nature made me my own enemy. There is something distressingly responsive in my outward self ; my features have a trick of being sympathetic, without consulting my wishes. A woman smiles upon me, and displays her white teeth—there is a world of love in the well-shaped mouth ; her eyes look languishingly into mine ; I return her smile ; my eyes melt in the light of hers ; she presses my hand—ah ! the soft velvet palms ! what have they not to answer for !

I press hers ; and so the comedy proceeds, Mauvain ; but my heart plays no part in it. It is as cold as stone."

"Absolutely !" said Mauvain, in an amused tone.

"Absolutely," said Harold, in a serious tone.

"Harold, you charm me out of myself, and cause me to forget events which have made us fugitives from our native land."

"I am happy to be of use."

"Have you subjected this comedy of yours to criticism ?"

"I have searched and examined it learnedly and severely, and I have always condemned it."

"Then have you been a most insincere actor, having played in it so often in a mask which no man—or woman—saw."

"Admitted. But how different has it been with you ! You have entered heart and soul into your pleasures. Life for you has been a jewelled cup, into which love flowed as often as you drained it ; and you drained it often, Mauvain, and with zest."

"You have envied me."

"Never. I would not have changed with you ; I would not change with you. For if it happen, as it may, that that for which I yearn come within my reach, I shall taste a joy it is impossible for you ever to have known, ever to know !"

"Coxcomb !" exclaimed Mauvain. "But you are right, perhaps, in that part of your hypothesis which applies to the future. Alas ! you have thirty years the advantage of me. What would I give for those thirty years !"

"You are fond of life, Mauvain."

"I worship it, and deplore the days that pass too quickly by. Yes ; I am fond of life, and use it to its proper end. Nature bestows it, and says, Enjoy. I obey ; I open my heart and soul to the pleasure to be derived from all life, animate and inanimate, which surrounds me, and like the bee I live on what is fairest."

"And sink to earth, clogged with sweetness."

"What, then ? It is not death ; nature recuperates, and bids you enjoy once more. Ungrateful to refuse. It is the only true philosophy."

"Feed on it, then ; I have a philosophy of my own."

"And so, Harold, after all these years you come to the conclusion that you have never loved."

"Never ; and you, Mauvain, seriously ?"

"To love seriously," replied Mauvain, laughing, "is to substitute pain for pleasure."

"But in truth ?"

"In truth, then, and without seriousness, I have loved a hundred times. Nature in me has a most devout admirer, and when spring comes round I open my heart to it. Youth—which means beauty, Harold—has an irresistible attraction to me. Ah, if I possessed it in my own person ! If it could be bought !"

"There are such fables."

"That is the misfortune of it—they are only fables. I must die one day, I suppose. If I could choose the time and manner of my death, I would die in spring, with evidences of beauty's birth around me."

"Would it not be better," said Harold grimly, "to die surrounded by wintry aspects ? One could say good-bye with greater equanimity. Mauvain, I am curious upon certain matters. You will pardon me if I continue speaking on a theme I find very fascinating."

"Certainly. The theme is——"

"You, Mauvain—yourself, your nature, motives, inner life ; for years you have fascinated me."

"You are entertaining me with a succession of surprises, Harold. You have made a study of me, then ?"

"In my idle way, Mauvain, I have made a study of you."

"Give me some idea of myself—for of course you know me thoroughly."

"Most thoroughly, I think," said Harold listlessly ; "but I will wait for a more appropriate opportunity to satisfy your curiosity. In the meantime, satisfy mine."

"Proceed ; you will not overstep the line."

"That divides us ? No ; I will not overstep it. Mauvain, you and I know something of each other ; we have shared danger and pleasure together. How many adventures have we been engaged in ! Light enterprises undertaken to put life into dull hours ! And always successful, Mauvain. However small the whim, it was gratified, never mind at what expense to others."

"Do you intend," said Mauvain, "to drag the whole world into your exordium ?"

"Heaven forbid ! Every man for himself ; every woman, too ; but she generally is."

"I have found it so."

"Selfish to the backbone ; cunning ; artful ; but unfortunately for herself, weak."

"Not always, Harold," said Mauvain, following with but an idle attention the current of his companion's spoken thoughts.

"These weak creatures are capable of much that a man would shrink from. Given to each equal scope and opportunity, I would sooner incur the hatred of three men than of one woman."

"Yes, we learn these lessons; but a woman can be persuaded; her nature is gracious; man's is brutal. There is a weapon which, skilfully used, is stronger than woman's whole artillery. That weapon is flattery. You have used it, Mauvain, with effect. True, that woman is capable of much; self-sacrifice, for one thing. Then she has faith; man has not. You follow me, Mauvain?"

"For the life of me, Harold, I cannot see where you are drifting."

"Aptly said. Nor can I; but I have been drifting ever since I can remember, being governed by accidental moods."

Mauvain turned his eyes with languid interest upon the face of his friend, saying: "I do believe you are speaking in earnest."

"If so, it must be accidental, for such a man as I cannot but be barren of serious intention."

"Seriousness is a mistake. He is the wisest who is the least serious."

"Then folly is wisdom."

"Fools are the most serious of men."

"It is a pleasure to converse with a man of intellect; therein lies part of your fascination."

"One who did not know you as well as I do, Harold, would suppose you had a direct motive in your compliments."

"I have a motive, Mauvain; I wish you, in honest truth, to answer me one question."

"A hundred, Harold."

"I will not tax you. It is a question concerning woman. Of all the women you have loved whom did you love the best?"

"Of all the days I have enjoyed," retorted Mauvain, "which did I enjoy the most? Of all the dinners I have eaten—

and so on, and so on. Harold, I cannot answer you, for a sufficient reason."

"The reason being——"

"That I do not know; and indeed, if I did, to express preference for one would be to wrong the others."

"Think a moment, Mauvain. Is there not one to whom, in looking back, your heart turns and acknowledges before all others?"

"One! there are a dozen! Are you answered now?"

"Yes; and I thank you. You have a light spirit, Mauvain; you were created for enjoyment. My last voyage to this fair isle was not made in such agreeable company. Perhaps you forget what you said to me when you proposed the trip. When a man was surfeited with the sweets or disgusted with the buffets of the world, you said, the Silver Isle was the land to come to to spin out what remained of the days of his life. Without premeditation, you justify your words. In the Silver Isle, said you, dwells the spirit of simplicity. Well, we shall have time to search for it."

"And if it present itself to you in the shape of a beautiful girl!"

"I will fall at her feet and worship her. Would not you?"

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXXVI. ON DEPORTMENT.

FRANK TREGEAR had come up to town at the end of February. He remained in London, with an understanding that he was not to see Lady Mary again till the Easter holidays. He was then to pay a visit to Matching, and to enter in, it may be presumed, on the full fruition of his advantages as accepted suitor. All this had been arranged with a good deal of precision—as though there had still been a hope left that Lady Mary might change her mind. Of course there was no such hope. When the duke asked the young man to dine with him, when he invited him to drink that memorable glass of wine, when the young man was allowed, in the presence of the Boncassens, to sit next Lady Mary, it was of course settled. But the father probably found some relief in yielding by slow degrees. "I would rather that there should be no correspondence till then," he had said both to Tregear and to his daughter. And they had promised there should be no correspondence. At Easter they would meet. After Easter, Mary was to come up to London to be present at her brother's wedding, to which also Tregear had been formally invited; and it was hoped that then something might be settled as to their own marriage. Tregear, with the surgeon's permission, took his seat in Parliament. He was introduced by two leading members on the Conservative side, but immediately afterwards found himself seated next to his friend Silverbridge on the top bench behind the ministers. The house was very full, as

there was a feverish report abroad that Sir Timothy Beeswax intended to make a statement. No one quite knew what the statement was to be; but every politician in the House and out of it thought that he knew that the statement would be a bid for higher power on the part of Sir Timothy himself. If there had been dissensions in the Cabinet, the secret of them had been well kept. To Tregear, who was not as yet familiar with the House, there was no special appearance of activity: but Silverbridge could see that there was more than wonted animation. That the Treasury bench should be full at this time was a thing of custom. A whole broadside of questions would be fired off, one after another, like a rattle of musketry down the ranks, when as nearly as possible the report of each gun is made to follow close upon that of the gun before—with this exception, that in such case each little sound is intended to be as like as possible to the preceding; whereas with the rattle of the questions and answers, each question and each answer becomes a little more authoritative and less courteous than the last. The Treasury bench was ready for its usual responsive firing, as the questioners were of course in their places. The opposition front bench was also crowded, and those behind were nearly equally full. There were many peers in the gallery, and a general feeling of sensation prevailed. All this Silverbridge had been long enough in the House to appreciate; but to Tregear the House was simply the House.

"It's odd enough we should have a row the very first day you come," said Silverbridge.

"You think there will be a row?"

"Beeswax has something special to say."

He's not here yet, you see. They've left about six inches for him there between Roper and Sir Orlando. You'll have the privilege of looking just down on the top of his head when he does come. I sha'n't stay much longer after that."

"Where are you going?"

"I don't mean to-day. But I should not have been here now—in this very place I mean—but I want to stick to you just at first. I shall move down below the gangway; and not improbably creep over to the other side before long."

"You don't mean it?"

"I think I shall. I begin to feel I've made a mistake."

"In coming to this side at all."

"I think I have. After all it is not very important."

"What is not important? I think it very important."

"Perhaps it may be to you, and perhaps you may be able to keep it up. But the more I think of it the less excuse I seem to have for deserting the old ways of the family. What is there in those fellows down there to make a fellow feel that he ought to bind himself to them neck and heels?"

"Their principles."

"Yes; their principles! I believe I have some vague idea as to supporting property and land and all that kind of thing. I don't know that anybody wants to attack anything."

"Somebody soon would want to attack it if there were no defenders."

"I suppose there is an outside power—the people, or public opinion, or whatever they choose to call it. And the country will have to go very much as that outside power chooses. Here, in Parliament, everybody will be as conservative as the outside will let them. I don't think it matters on which side you sit—but it does matter that you shouldn't have to act with those who go against the grain with you."

"I never heard a worse political argument in my life."

"I daresay not. However, here's Sir Timothy. When he looks in that way, all buckram, deportment, and solemnity, I know he's going to pitch into somebody."

At this moment the leader of the House came in from behind the Speaker's chair and took his place between Mr. Roper and Sir Orlando Drought. Silverbridge had been right in saying that Sir Timothy's air was solemn. When a man has to declare a solemn purpose on a solemn occasion in

a solemn place, it is needful that he should be solemn himself. And though the solemnity which befits a man best will be that which the importance of the moment may produce, without thought given by himself to his own outward person, still, who is there can refrain himself from some attempt? Who can boast, who that has been versed in the ways and duties of high places, that he has kept himself free from all study of grace of feature, of attitude, of gait—or even of dress? For most of our bishops, for most of our judges, our statesmen, our orators, our generals, for many even of our doctors and our parsons, even our attorneys, our tax-gatherers, and certainly our butlers and our coachmen, Mr. Turveydrop, the great professor of deportment, has done much. But there should always be the art to underlie and protect the art—the art that can hide the art. The really clever archbishop, the really potent chief justice, the man who, as a politician, will succeed in becoming a king of men, should know how to carry his buckram without showing it. It was in this that Sir Timothy perhaps failed a little. There are men who look as though they were born to wear blue ribbons. It has come probably from study, but it seems to be natural. Sir Timothy did not impose on those who looked at him as do these men. You could see a little of the paint, you could hear the crumple of the starch and the padding; you could trace something of uneasiness in the would-be composed grandeur of the brow. "Turveydrop!" the spectator would say to himself. But, after all, it may be a question whether a man be open to reproach for not doing that well which the greatest among us—if we could find one great enough—would not do at all.

For I think we must hold that true personal dignity should be achieved—must, if it be quite true, have been achieved—without any personal effort. Though it be evinced, in part, by the carriage of the body, that carriage should be the fruit of the operation of the mind. Even when it be assisted by external garniture, such as special clothes, and wigs, and ornaments, such garniture should have been prescribed by the sovereign or by custom, and should not have been selected by the wearer. In regard to speech a man may study all that which may make him suasive, but if he go beyond that he will trench on those histrionic efforts which he will know to be wrong because he will be ashamed to

acknowledge them. It is good to be beautiful, but it should come of God and not of the hairdresser. And personal lignity is a great possession; but a man should struggle for it no more than he would for beauty. Many, however, do struggle for it, and with such success that, though they do not achieve quite the real thing, still they get something on which they can bolster themselves up and be mighty.

Others, older men than Silverbridge, saw as much as did our young friend, but they were more complaisant and more reasonable. They, too, heard the crackle of the buckram, and were aware that the last touch of awe had come upon that brow just as its owner was emerging from the shadow of the Speaker's chair; but to them it was a thing of course. A real Cæsar is not to be found every day, nor can we always have a Pitt to control our debates. That kind of thing, that last touch, has its effect. Of course it is all paint—but how would the poor girl look before the gas-lights if there were no paint? The House of Commons likes a little deportment on occasions. If a special man looks bigger than you, you can console yourself by reflecting that he also looks bigger than your fellows. Sir Timothy probably knew what he was about, and did himself on the whole more good than harm by his little tricks.

As soon as Sir Timothy had taken his seat, Mr. Rattler got up from the opposition bench to ask him some question on a matter of finance. The brewers were anxious about publican licenses. Could the Chancellor of the Exchequer say a word on the matter. Notice had of course been given, and the questioner had stated a quarter of an hour previously that he would postpone his query till the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in the house.

Sir Timothy rose from his seat, and in his blandest manner began by apologising for his late appearance. He was sorry that he had been prevented by public business from being in his place to answer the honourable gentleman's question in its proper turn. And even now, he feared, that he must decline to give any answer which could be supposed to be satisfactory. It would probably be his duty to make a statement to the House on the following day—a statement which he was not quite prepared to make at the present moment. But in the existing state of things he was unwilling to make any reply to any question

by which he might seem to bind the government to any opinion. Then he sat down. And rising again not long afterwards, when the House had gone through certain formal duties, he moved that it should be adjourned till the next day. Then all the members trooped out, and with the others Tregear and Lord Silverbridge. "So that is the end of your first day of Parliament," said Silverbridge.

"What does it all mean?"

"Let us go to the Carlton and hear what the fellows are saying."

On that evening both the young men dined at Mr. Boncassen's house. Though Tregear had been cautioned not to write to Lady Mary, and though he was not to see her before Easter, still it was so completely understood that he was about to become her husband, that he was entertained in that capacity by all those who were concerned in the family. "And so they will all go out," said Mr. Boncassen.

"That seems to be the general idea," said the expectant son-in-law. "When two men want to be first, and neither will give way, they can't very well get on in the same boat together." Then he expatiated angrily on the treachery of Sir Timothy, and Tregear in a more moderate way joined in the same opinion.

"Upon my word, young men, I doubt whether you are right," said Mr. Boncassen. "Whether it can be possible that a man should have risen to such a position with so little patriotism as you attribute to our friend, I will not pretend to say. I should think that in England it was impossible. But of this I am sure, that the faculty which exists here for a minister or ministers to go out of office without disturbance of the Crown, is a great blessing. You say the other party will come in."

"That is most probable," said Silverbridge.

"With us the other party never comes in—never has a chance of coming in—except once in four years, when the President is elected. That one event binds us all for four years."

"But you do change your ministers," said Tregear.

"A secretary may quarrel with the President, or he may have the gout, or be convicted of peculation."

"And yet you think yourselves more nearly free than we are."

"I am not so sure of that. We have had a pretty difficult task, that of carrying on a government in a new country, which is

nevertheless more populous than almost any old country. The influxions are so rapid, that every ten years the nature of the people is changed. It isn't easy; and though I think on the whole we've done pretty well, I am not going to boast that Washington is as yet the seat of a political Paradise."

THE BROADS AND RIVERS OF EAST ANGLIA.

THE principal rivers of Norfolk and Suffolk in connection with the Broads are the Yare, the Waveney, and the Bure. The first-named is called the Wensum while above the city of Norwich. The Yare drains Norfolk. Its source is in the centre of the county, south of Wymondham, and its course is first towards the north, then south-east. Its length is full sixty miles, and the area of its basin one thousand one hundred and eighty square miles. It falls into the ocean at Gorleston, below Great Yarmouth, after forming Breydon Water, four miles long and one mile wide, and a long canal-like harbour. Its tributaries on the left bank are Blackwater, which has its source near Shipdam, the course easterly, joining the Yare at Marlingford after a run of fourteen miles.

The Wensum has its source near Rainham, course south-east, passes Fakenham and Norwich, below which city it joins the Yare after a course of forty-five miles.

The Bure has its rise near Melton Constable, not far from Hindolveston, runs south-east, passes Aylsham, to which it is navigable from the ocean; length fifty miles. The Bure has an affluent in the Ant, which flows by North Walsham, and its length is thirteen miles.

On the right bank the Yare is indebted to the Waveney, which rises near Lopham, takes an east-north-east direction, waters Diss, Harleston, Beccles, and Bungay, to which latter town it is navigable. It enters the Yare at Burgh Castle, and combined with the Yare forms the Breydon Water, as above. Before the Waveney reaches Lowestoft, with which it communicates by an artificial cut and masonry at Mutford Bridge, it expands into a magnificent sheet of water known as Oulton Broad, and below the lock enters an expanse of tidal sea-water called Lake Lothing. The length of the Waveney is sixty miles, and the area of its basin one thousand one hundred and eighty square miles.

It will thus be seen that the drainage of this enormous area has but one open outlet to the sea at Gorleston, below Yarmouth, and that it is not surprising, therefore, that during exceptional flood times the absence of an adequate channel is the occasion of those disastrous inundations around Norwich and the low-lying lands throughout the county for miles. One of these calamities visited Norwich as recently as 1878, when more than one-fifth of the city was submerged, and the dwellers within its ravages subjected to great loss and most trying privations.

We have advisedly placed the broads first in our title, as they, although said to be dependent for their aqueous supply from the river, are the peculiar theme upon which we desire to dwell. The word "broad" is entirely provincial, and characterises a peculiar feature in the topography of East Anglia. It simply means the large lakes or basins (lagoons, in fact) which by a glance at the ordnance map will be found mostly connected by narrow channels to the three important rivers, the Yare, Waveney, and Bure.

We have qualified the statement that the broads are dependent for their supply upon the main rivers, as we are inclined to believe otherwise, and that the broads owe their influx more to natural springs and inland drainage than to any other source, and that they thus contribute a constant accession of fresh and pure water to the rivers rather than borrowing it from them. These broads are chiefly in the north-eastern part of Norfolk and a portion of Suffolk. If an ideal triangle be drawn on the map, having for its points Norwich, Lowestoft, and Happisburgh, it will comprise the principal part of them; and their formation is attributed to the generally flat surface of the counties, and the consequent sluggish course of the rivers.

John Greaves Nall, in his Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, says that "West of Yarmouth is a great alluvial flat, once the bed of a vast estuary, which extended many miles inland; its subsoil consists of alternate layers of moor and silt, accumulated whilst the sea had free ingress. The most important remains of this estuary are the various small lakes called broads. The remainder of the estuary is now more or less laid dry, and constitutes a continuous tract of marshes, stretching for miles along the western side of the town, their character modified by the fresh or salt water which

lows by, and occasionally inundates hem." As the coast, on two sides of East Anglia, is not comparatively very far off in any direction, and sandy soil predominates, vegetation for some distance inland is but coarse and scanty, and few plants can flourish for the want of water, which filters through before the roots have time to absorb it. They consist chiefly of narrains and grasses whose long roots penetrate deep enough to reach whatever moisture exists. Were it not, however, for these simple, uninteresting-looking plants, the country along the coast must long since have been inundated or buried; their long shoots extending many feet in length at a few inches below the surface, and crossing and matting in every direction, bind down the sands blown up from the beach, whilst their short, strong foliage prevents it being dispersed over the neighbouring lands.

The broads are of all dimensions, from the puny pool, choked up with reeds and rushes, called locally a "pulk," to a wide, extended lake, and are mostly comparatively shallow, with a firm, hard, marly bottom generally as even as a bowling-green. They are often margined with a jungle of tall reeds, the same kind as that with which the rivers are lined, giving excellent shelter to pike and rudd. Some of them are embanked by rising grounds, the trees on which come down and hang over the water's edge, making the aspect exceedingly picturesque, particularly when the scene is supplemented with one or more of the graceful private yachts with the large sails peculiar to these waters.

Of the broads there are nearly fifty altogether in Norfolk and Suffolk. The first affluent into the Bure is Muck Fleet, a stream which drains a large lake called the Ormesbury Broad, but is not navigable. These broads consist of seven sheets of water, intersected by two causeways. They contain seven hundred acres of water, which in the group of Ormesby Broad, is so pure that the population of Great Yarmouth, Southtown, and Gorleston are supplied from them. These seven sheets of water are as follows, namely, from the south to the north: the old Burgh Broad; the Filby and Burgh Broad; the Filby Broad; the Waterlily Broad; Rollesby and Ormesby Broad; the Waterworks Broad; and the Hemsby and Martham Broad. Angling is permitted in all these broads except Filby, although they are private

property, and they may be fished, with the exception named, by application at the anglers' inn, The Eels' Foot.

Proceeding towards the north-east, and passing under Acle Bridge, the Bure receives by far its most important tributary, not before named, the Thurne, or the Hundred Stream, which joins it at Thurnmouth. The Thurn drains the water from five broads, namely: Hickling Great Broad, five hundred acres; Horsey Mere, one hundred and twenty acres; Martham Broad, seventy acres; Heigham Sounds, one hundred and fifty acres; and Whitlesea Mere, fifteen acres. In Hickling Broad, although shallow, the water is remarkably good. Martham Broad is to a great extent blocked up with aquatic vegetation.

Returning to the main river at Thurnmouth the Bure turns to the north-west. At about the distance of two miles it receives the surplus waters of the South Walsham and Upton Broad, and on the other side the river Ant as before observed. The Ant drains Barton Broad, an expansive sheet of water and several other smaller broads, altogether over two hundred acres. Wherries (sailing barges) from Yarmouth pass up the Bure as far as its junction with the Ant. This river is made navigable to North Walsham by means of an inland navigation, called the North Walsham and Dilham Canal, and a large traffic is carried on to and from Yarmouth; coals, goods, and timber are taken up country, and corn, hay, and reeds from the margin of the broads are brought down, the latter for thatching, hurdle-making, fencing, and other purposes. The Barton Broad is strictly preserved.

As the river Bure turns still further north-west, the outlet of the Ranworth Broad of one hundred and fifty acres is observed. In a bend of the river at Horning Ferry is situated the great resort of Norfolk anglers, the Ferry Inn. The river itself, but not the broad, is free to the public for angling.

Proceeding still further north-west are the Hoveton Small Broad, about eight acres, and then Hoveton Great Broad, one hundred and twenty-three acres, and also Woodbastwick Broad, forty acres. We then come to Salhouse Broad, and near these are Wroxham Broad, altogether about two hundred acres. The Bure then flows north-west, under Wroxham Bridge, draining several other small pieces of water at Belaugh.

This, then, completes the list of broads

which are drained by the main river Bure. We now turn our attention to the river Yare. Immediately above Great Yarmouth there is a large tidal lake, called Breydon Water, one thousand two hundred acres. Vessels sail through the middle of this up to Norwich. The Norwich and Yarmouth railway takes the course of the Yare valley, and has stations at Brundall, Buckenham, Cantley, and Reedham, each of which is a short walk to inns on the banks of the Yare, greatly frequented by anglers during the season. The distance from the south pier at Yarmouth to the new mills, Norwich, by river is thirty-two miles. Barges can go no further than these mills. Upon this course of the river there are two broads, namely, Surlingham and Rockland; together these broads contain nearly one hundred and thirty acres of water, and are the great spawning-grounds of the Yare.

At the north-west end of Breydon the river Waveney joins the Yare under the wall of Burgh Castle. Only two large broads flow into this river, which is nearly seventy miles in length. At Oulton Broad and Mutford Bridge there is an excellent angler's and yachtman's rest. The Waveney for many miles forms the boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk, and its head waters rise within a few feet of the Ouse, which flows on to Lynn Wash. Thus it will be seen that in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk there exists a magnificent chain of inland lakes, containing five thousand acres of water, connected with the sea by about two hundred miles of river, the greater part of which is navigable. For excursion by water throughout the whole of this system of rivers and broads, perhaps the best starting point is either Great Yarmouth or Mutford.

No spot in the British Isles affords better opportunities for the study of natural history than the neighbourhood of the broads. In the class of water-birds the number of species added to the British list exceeds that which any other place in the kingdom can claim, whilst the frequent occurrence of the rarer species; and the great abundance of the common, present opportunities met with nowhere else. In former times the Norfolk fens must have swarmed with wild-fowl, and this, coupled with the abundance of fish, attracted the attention of numerous monastic bodies.

Several works upon the flora and fauna of East Anglia are more or less accessible to the student, by Hooker, Smith, Dilwyn,

Martens, and Paget; the contents, more particularly of the latter, are rich in information. With regard to the general fauna of Norfolk Mr. Lubbock's cheap manual is perhaps the most complete. We learn from this work that amongst the mammalia which are or were formerly inhabitants of these districts were the red deer, their horns of a large size having been found in various situations, very commonly in ponds and pieces of water; and the horns of the roebuck, although much less frequent, are occasionally discovered. The badger, frequent at the beginning of this century, is almost extinct. The martin-cat has likewise become extremely rare. The polecat is not uncommon. It is strictly nocturnal, and then so erratic in its habits that detection and capture are difficult. They used to be hunted with hounds resembling the otter-hound, but smaller, low long-bodied dogs covered with rough hair. Packs are still kept in Wales and the North of England. The Yarmouth water-dog deserves a special notice, although not entirely peculiar to the country. For its sagacity the writer can vouch. One instance may serve to illustrate the general instincts of the class. A dog of this kind was kept at the fen pumping-mill at the top of Breydon Water. In the winter his favourite pursuit was to go out by himself, and search in the rough stones which face the Breydon wall for wounded wild-fowl: these always, if possible, creep into some nook or corner. When the wind was north-east, and many ducks in the country, he sometimes carried home eight or nine wild-fowl of various kinds in the same morning. After leaving one at the mill with his master, he returned of his own accord to the place whence he had taken it, proceeding regularly in his search, and every time recommencing exactly where he left off. As he travelled to and fro on the marsh wall, he would, if unloaded, wag his tail and acknowledge the notice of any one who spoke to him; but no sooner had he obtained booty than he seemed to consider himself the guardian of a treasure, and to distrust every one. As soon as a man appeared to be coming towards him he left the wall, and crossing a wide dyke, betook himself to the marshes, and went the longest way home.

It is generally supposed that a cat has an unconquerable aversion to wetting its feet. There are many authentic exceptions to this notion. While we were staying at the Wherry Hotel, Mutford, we were often on the banks from which the anglers depart

or the sport which is here of the best. A cat belonging to the house, tempted down by the fry and smaller fish thrown out of the baskets of the captors, sometimes found herself so much engaged on board a boat as to be unaware that it had proceeded far into the lake before her knowledge of her abduction had become a fact. Heedless of water and its consequences, however, she would mount the gunwale, look for an instant in the direction of the hotel, then make a header and swim, as well as any dog, towards the landing-stage, mount the ladder, wring herself mop-wise, and shortly afterwards be found purring about with a perfectly dry skin.

The stoat is in the fens known as the lobster. It revels and increases, despite all the traps and snares of the gamekeeper; the great extent of open rabbit-warrenry contributing to its existence.

Whether the ferret is, as urged, no more than the polecat domesticated, we must leave to the closer observations of naturalists; but our experience permits us to draw a wide distinction between the two. How slow and inert, for instance, is the one, how active and lithe is the other; but this, says Lubbock, "may arise from close confinement. I knew an instance in which three or four ferrets were turned off to free a mill from rats, and after a few weeks of perfect liberty they exhibited all the briskness and agility of the polecat."

We cannot forego the opportunity here of putting in a word for the weasel. It is an old friend of ours, to whom we can accord the best of characters. Let us give one word of advice to those who are troubled with rats or mice. Buy a weasel. A single one in a farmyard, after it has been petted from its birth, and fed upon bread-and-milk, is invaluable. Indeed, in Norfolk it has acquired the name of mouse-hunter. The weasel ought not to be confounded with the stoat. The latter is an egg-sucker and game-destroyer, but the weasel is now becoming generally accepted as an exterminator of vermin only.

The otter is becoming scarce in East Anglia. A few are occasionally caught in steel traps, set without a bait in the places where they land to eat; and there is hardly a broad in Norfolk in which an otter has not some time or another been found drowned in one of the numerous bow-nets set in the spring for pike and tench, after the contents of which they have dived and lost their lives.

The brown rat is too numerous everywhere; the black rat, the original rat of Britain, is still occasionally found in Norwich; the water-rat is abundant everywhere in low grounds. It has, however, a determined enemy in the stoat and weasel, as likewise has the short-tailed field-mouse which is also plentiful. The common-mouse is found everywhere. The long-tailed field-mouse is also general. The harvest-mouse is found partially. The common shrew is general. The water-shrew occurs occasionally, and a somewhat recently discovered species has been taken near Norwich. The hedgehog is still common, though much persecuted. The squirrel is found more or less in all plantations. The dormouse is scarce.

To give even a list of the names of the water-fowl and land birds for which the districts of the broads were, and still are, famed would take up far more space than is at our disposal.

Of the fish indigenous to the fresh and brackish waters of the counties, we may mention the Alice-shad, which may be seen in Oulton Broad in considerable shoals of individuals during the summer months from one pound to six pounds and over. They will seldom take a bait, and are generally secured by the spear. The common, Pomeranian, and white bream, burbot, common and crucian carp, chub, dace, eels (broad and sharp nosed) flounder, garfish, gudgeon, loach, lamprey, lamprey, perch, pike, roach, rudd, ruffe, smelt, sturgeon tench, bull, common, salmon, and sea trout are all met with.

Railways are at length penetrating into this hitherto terra incognita. The one from Norwich, Aylsham, and Cromer, with its branches, open upon some of the most interesting of the broads; and as it follows as much as possible the valley of the Bure all the more-important towns and villages on their banks have alighting stations. The other new line is from the Yarmouth sands, skirting the sea to Caistor, and then touching upon the broads of Ormsby, Martham, Stalham, Hickling, and the river Ant, with the town of North Walsham, &c.

The whole of the inland fisheries of Norfolk and Suffolk are protected by a special Act of Parliament, which, while it greatly circumscribes the powers of the net and other engines of wholesale destruction, permits the use of the angle without let or hindrance all the year round in the free waters of which there are vast extents.

Two other railways are about to be

constructed which will still further develop the fisheries of this county, and as they will approach the springs and sources of the rivers will tend materially to aid in the cultivation of trout now seriously engaging the attention of the wealthy riparians of Norfolk.

ANITA VON KAMPF.

THE class and extent of education which a man should give his children ought to be a very grave matter to resolve. I have not myself had occasion to study it, but I have laughed or grieved, in many parts of the world, over the demonstration of other people's errors. The question settles itself happily, in many cases, by the constitutional inclination of youth to learn as little as may be; but sometimes the child, especially the girl, finds itself, on returning from school, amidst surroundings with which its training has destroyed all sympathy. There cannot be a sight more pathetically amusing than that of a young lady who comes from England, with her head full of figures and Mangnal's Questions, to live in the bush amongst black men and cattle and mud and all things unclean. From the utmost refinement of artificiality, she is plunged into the mere struggle for existence; from the last stage of civilisation, she returns almost to the first. I have known such cases where the exile regretted her teaching, and passionately wished she had been brought up like the semi-savages around. And, in general, my experience is that parents learn almost to hold this opinion, if the girl do not.

Once upon a time, a measure of reform in the Prussian navy offered superior officers very favourable terms for retirement. Amongst those who took advantage thereof was a post-captain, whom I will call Von Kampf. He scarcely claimed to be noble, he had no private means, and when he commuted his half-pay there was no prospect before him but emigration; for he had a wife, a baby, and the expectation of another. In the course of service he had visited the Spanish Main. The beauty and natural wealth, the fine climate, and the endless capabilities of Nicaragua much impressed him. I have not personally found that sailors are more simple-minded than other men. On the contrary, my experience is that they are particularly wide-awake as a class, perceiving their own interest, and pursuing it with a shrewdness

and tenacity which landmen cannot excel. But Captain Von Kampf was an exception. He put two and two together sagaciously enough, but he failed to see that they would not multiply without operations impossible to execute. The climate and soil of Nicaragua are admirably suited for cacao and coffee, which Europe is eager to buy at prices which should be vastly profitable. Therefore, thought the good Herr, I will grow cacao and coffee in Nicaragua, and make a fortune. The premises were sound, but the result did not arrive.

Captain Von Kampf bought, for a nominal sum, a piece of ground between Castillo and San Carlos, on the San Juan river. It was partially cleared, and a hut stood on it. In two years' time the place was so far improved in all respects that he ventured to summon his wife from Germany. She came with delight, leaving the children at home. With her clever and careful overlooking, and the captain's energy, their plantation grew to be as prosperous as such small enterprises ever are in Nicaragua, but no more. The coffee-trees were brought from San José de Costa Rica, the cacao from Dirioma; oranges were planted, a garden laid out; room by room the hut was enlarged. No more children came, which was not unfortunate, seeing that the nearest medical man lived a hundred miles away, and he had neither drugs nor diploma.

This couple worked without ceasing for the boy and girl at home, to make things comfortable and civilised as far as might be. I have them before my eyes now. A tall, thin old man, with a wistful look; his close beard dashed with grey, as though time had clutched it by handfuls. A stout, frank dame, of the best German type, lower in breeding, I should imagine, than her husband, but gentlewoman to the core of her honest heart. The husband wore grey cotton in place of cloth; but his jackets were cut and buttoned after the fashion of naval uniform. The housewife discarded some petticoats probably, but she kept her stays, her decent peignoir, her cap, her neat shoes and stockings; and both one and the other were as tidy in their jungle home as if the admiral commanding were hourly looked for to make a general inspection.

The son came home at length, a bright, tall, handsome boy. He delighted in the place; shot, fished, explored the forest, paddled to Greytown or up to San Carlos, learned enough Spanish to make love, and then vowed there was no country like

Nicaragua. It may be, however, that the knowledge that he must return in three years' time for military service brightened the present exile. Before his sister came in her turn, the boy wandered off to the gold diggings, with little money but much sense, to pick up a fortune if it could anywhere be found. Captain von Kampf might well be proud of his daughter. I never saw a more beautiful creature of the German brunette type. Tall though she was, her dark brown hair hung in two thick plaits below her waist. Her black eyebrows were perfectly arched; lashes glossy as silk shaded large hazel eyes full of life and humour. Her mouth, her figure, were perfect in slender symmetry. She looked thoroughbred to the bone.

I have said that the old couple laboured to make their home comfortable. Disappointed ambition did not now carry them beyond this modest aim. Not that the captain's estimate proved false. The climate, the soil, did everything that could possibly be asked of them, but there was no trustworthy means of carriage, no security for labour or produce. River thieves, travelling in bands, would strip a hundred cacao bushes in a night. Troops would halt in harvest time and sweep away the maize. The commandant of San Carlos or Castillo would "pronounce" for something or somebody—himself perhaps—and demand benevolences. Prussia was but Prussia then, a country scarce heard of in Nicaraguan affairs. I think it had no minister at all in the five republics, and its consuls were disregarded. Von Kampf prayed only that his small capital might be rescued for Anita's dower.

But in fifteen years of toil and sacrifice much had been done to make the house and the ground about it pleasant to a young girl's eye, and Anita was delighted, as her brother had been. A double row of orange trees, always in bloom, and always in fruit, screened the dwelling from the river. On one side, to a person landing, was the garden; on the other, a grove of silky plantains; in front, the house, garlanded with roses. A fine tree left standing here and there had been encircled with a rustic bench, and draped with the loveliest creepers. Dogs, deer, monkeys, racoons, flaming macaws, dainty yellow paroquets, slept in the sunshine, or fed in the shade. The inside of the house was not less quaint and novel. The coarse mud walls, the floors of beaten dung, were hidden with mats, snow-white or coloured, after a fashion

admired by Von Kampf on the other side the world. Skins and horns and beautiful feathers were the ornaments, with a few treasured relics of civilisation.

In the first flush of enthusiasm Anita declared that she could live in this enchanted spot for ever. For awhile, in truth, the girl was perfectly happy. To sit under a tree, with her jungle pets around her, was intoxicating bliss. The scent of the orange blossoms, the murmur of the river, the voices of the forest, lulled her sense to delicious dreams. At morning she was wakened by the thunderous roar of the baboons, the screeching of macaws, which flew and lit and rose again like a fiery cloud. In the hot noontide the cicales sang, the passing boatmen hailed each other in long melancholy shouts. At evening, the frogs began their concert, not inharmonious, the congos howled again, the parrots chuckled softly as they winged their fluttering flight towards home. And then at dark, when the lamp-light shone amongst the roses, and the pale mists curled upon the river, what music in the beetle's hum, what shuddering mystery in the scream that rang through the silent forest! Life became one sensuous romance—whilst the novelty lasted.

But of such pleasures the human mind grows weary, even when shared with love. Anita was an innocent girl, but, at seventeen, instincts are all the stronger because not understood. The weeks rolled into months, and no one visited the house save barefoot pedlars, and sordid buyers of produce. The boats all went past, unless, at night, a party would land to steal. Then the big dogs raised a furious clamour, and Von Kampf must go out with his gun, whilst she, trembling, crept into her mother's bed, and lay wide-eyed till his return. Upon the lofty steamer which went up or down each week, were crowds of people gaily dressed, dancing often to music which recalled past happy years. How she envied them! The pleasures which had first enthralled her wondering sense, now irritated and annoyed. That terrible howl at morning time, for which she used to wait with a delicious thrill, was known for the voice of a lazy, ugly little ape. The flowers were full of insects, the rose-trees sheltered scorpions and spiders. A hideous snake lived in every hole. Those dots on the river were floating alligators, the cry of the boatmen a blasphemous obscenity. She had nothing to do the livelong day; for on this plantation there was no girl's work.

The male servants were stolid Indians; the women foul-mouthed, dirty, familiar. She hated the noisy sunshine, she hated the still night—she hated her life.

But Anita kept these feelings to herself as much as possible. Her parents had been overjoyed at that first delight, which scattered many anxieties. An idea fixed in their minds was not easily moved. But one cannot weep languidly for several hours a day without betraying some signs of the exercise, and it presently dawned upon Madame von Kampf that her little daughter wanted change. Instantly the dear old captain ordered out his canoe, and paddled her off to Greytown. I could not describe Anita's joy in visiting that dreary little hamlet. There was not, I suppose, an unmarried white man in the place, where amusement is a word unknown for those who do not class drinking and poker as the highest joy. But there were people, life, sound of voices, movement, possibilities. Anita could scarcely refrain from speaking to the passers-by, from kissing the women to whom she was introduced. At the end of a week the captain brought her back, and loudly announced a cure. But within three days she was crying again, more miserable than ever.

Providentially, as these simple persons put it, Ludwig paid them a visit at this time. Anita was herself again at once; she talked and laughed without ceasing. They strolled into the forest, paddled on the river, ran up to San Carlos, or down to Castillo, and there danced, without too close scrutiny of their vis-à-vis. Every senora knew Ludwig, and every don fell in love with Anita. But Ludwig left, and the old symptoms returned more alarming. Her mother took her to Greytown, but this remedy did not twice avail. Perhaps the child was older—between seventeen and eighteen girls rapidly mature. She came back scarcely better, and from that time began to waste and pale. The parents, anxiously reflecting, decided that want of exercise was her complaint, and they were probably right in some degree. But how could a girl walk alone in those trackless, muddy woods, peopled by wild beasts and savage men? The captain dared not leave his hacienda every day, the peons could not be trusted. The river remained. Ludwig had taught his sister to paddle, and, what was almost more important, had trained a huge tiger-dog to sit in the canoe. With painful misgivings, leave was granted the girl to go upon the water with her dog and her mother.

Anita did not care much for the privilege; she had fallen into the despairing stage. But it did her good. She moved, her young limbs found expansion; she seemed, at least, to re-enter the living world, though it was but the world of a forgotten river. The rude boatmen seldom addressed her, so astonished were they at the apparition. When, by a chance designed, the canoe passed as closely as was safe beside the crowded steamers, all on deck rushed to the side.* If there were not a secret instinct which reveals to a pretty girl her beauty, Anita would then have learned that she found favour in the eyes of men. I can fancy her charming face under a sailor's straw hat, her lithe figure showing its exquisite contour beneath the white camice, the neat little foot and tiny glimpse of a bright-coloured stocking. I can fancy the pretty picture well, for I saw it fifteen years ago, and it is not forgotten.

Seeing that no harm arose, but much good, of these daily excursions, Madame von Kampf became less fearful. When the cares of the hacienda demanded extra vigilance, she suffered Anita to go out alone under the charge of the faithful Nero. If the girl when alone found the riverside population less indifferent, she was not so incautious as to tell. Their jests were too cynical for her distinct understanding. Gradually and unconsciously more and more freedom was granted, until her solitary excursion became part of the day's routine. Needless to say that the privilege was not abused. The most determined of flirts would abandon all hope on the San Juan.

One afternoon, as usual, Anita stepped into her canoe, and Nero followed delicately. The river was high, flowing very swift and turbulent even near the shore. There was no danger, however, except the abiding one of "snags." Anita paddled down just outside the shadow of the trees wondering sadly if all her life was to pass in this torpor. That was her reflection by day and night, and it so absorbed her that she did not look out as persons should who travel on a swollen tropic stream. Suddenly a crash, a swirl, and she found herself in the water clinging to a submerged tree. Anita was quick of body as of mind. She felt branches beneath her, and in a moment had gained a footing on

* Our story dates at the time when the Californian Accessory Transit Company still carried some twenty thousand to thirty thousand passengers across Nicaragua annually.

the trunk. The situation was not alarming for a good swimmer. Not ten feet distant the overhanging branches of the forest dragged and swayed in the racing stream. The canoe, full of water, lay entangled among the snags; Nero, whining, breasted the current at a little distance. Anita moved cautiously along until clear of the branches, and let herself go. In three strokes she reached the shore firm and dry above the flood, and the dog landed beside her.

A path worn by prowling boatmen follows the river bed, passing behind Von Kampf's plantation. Anita always carried a pistol in her excursions, and with Nero at her call she had little to fear. There was ample time before dusk to regain the house, which could not be more than two miles away. To reach it, however, a favourite camping-ground of travellers must be crossed, and she recollected noticing an unusually large number of bongos moored off the spot. Under other circumstances, the mere sight of people would have been not unpleasant, but Anita was dripping like a Naiad. Very uncomfortable in body and spirit she went on, and her quick feet speedily brought her to the clearing. It was crowded with soldiers in ragged jackets of blue "ticking," who lounged and cooked, brought wood from the forest, smoked, gambled, sang, and quarrelled. Two tents stood in the middle of the space, one old, tattered, and dirty, the other white and new. Whilst Anita stood hesitating at this unexpected sight, considering whether it were possible to avoid the camp, she remarked a sentry watching her. The safest course then was to advance, and she stepped boldly forward. A buzz of admiration arose, and the soldiers crowded round, laughing, impudent, but not consciously insulting. Exquisitely beautiful Anita looked, I have no doubt, her eyes big with anger and tears, her soft mouth quivering. Nero preceded her, growling low and looking from side to side.

Ready to drop with shame, the girl hurried on. As she passed the tents two men stepped out, curious to know the disturbance. One, tall and fair, stood motionless in admiration; the other snatched up a cloak and threw it round her, saying, in high-flown Spanish courtesy: "Pardon, young lady! It is the best the poor soldier has!" This ready act brought the tall man forward. "My friend's heart is sounder than his wardrobe, *senorita!*" he

exclaimed. "Let me offer something more worthy to enwrap a celestial visitant. Pedro! my cloak!" It was brought before Anita could protest: an article of the loveliest quality, with fur, and golden clasps, and brandenburgs, and what not. The girl would have preferred to keep the worn and faded garment, but this young man did not seem accustomed to refusals, and she scarcely dared somehow to resist. So, with murmured thanks to the other, she slipped off his gift, and the superior article was clasped beneath her chin.

"You have had an accident in the river," pursued the victor composedly, "and you are hurrying home? I am right? You must let me escort you. Raffaele, my revolver! No ladylike protestations, I beg! My friend Miguele's soldiers are the most virtuous of their sex, but it is on record that angels have been tempted by a daughter of man, and what strength has even a saint when tempted by an angel? Do you live far?"

They had set out already, for he did not seem to hear Anita's objection, and he ignored the presence of Miguele, who followed stupidly. With a careless pat, and a lug at his ear, he had reduced growling Nero to utter bewilderment. The dog looked askance, and showed his teeth, but when these denunciations were met by another good-natured lug, he frankly surrendered.

In replying timidly, Anita revealed her foreign accent, which was instantly observed. "You are American, of course? No? English? Ah, how stupid I am!" Forthwith he began to talk fluently in German, though Anita saw it was not his birth-tongue. She stole a glance from time to time at this the first gentleman she had met in eighteen months, saving her father and brother. No doubt at all but he was a gentleman, and how very clever, cultured, handsome, dashing! A child who had seen the world might have felt a disrespectful familiarity in his address, and an unpleasant arrogance. To Anita it seemed only that he spoke like a big, kindly brother. Masterful ways became her vague notion of a hero. By the time they reached the house, this stranger had already taken hold of her imagination. But a view of the hacienda checked his laughing, rather impertinent flow of talk. Anita was surprised to see that he frowned like a man disappointed. Captain von Kampf and his wife were seated as usual under a tree by the river, awaiting their child's return. She

ran to them, relieved her feelings with a shower of kisses and tears; then vanished without more explanation, her anxious mother following. Von Kampf recovered his wits to find himself before a young man, who twisted his heavy fair moustache to hide a smile.

"It is no wonder, sir," observed the latter cautiously, "that you are bewildered. Fräulein Anita ran her canoe on a snag, and swam to shore like a mermaid. As she crossed my camp down yonder, I took the liberty of lending her a cloak. Let me introduce myself. I am hastening by the longest possible route to join my regiment in China. My name is"—a glance at Miguele, and a moment's hesitation—"Yorke; and I may say, like our Scottish Norval, that to-day's happy deed gilds that humble name."

With frank cordiality the captain replied, and took his daughter's deliverer within. Miguele followed, and in answer to the captain's glance, Yorke introduced him as "Don Miguele Arroya, captain of artillery, and my schoolfellow at Stonyhurst. He does not talk German." This remark, which sounded like a kindly hint, was not so intended apparently. For Yorke resisted every effort to turn the conversation into English or Spanish.

Anita came down, looking but the lovelier for her sunshine tears. The admiration of both young men betrayed itself in their eyes, and the mother's instinct, so long asleep, was roused. In his air, his manner, Yorke had that indefinable something which tells of wealth. Duty enjoined it on Madame von Kampf to give her daughter an opportunity. She hurried off to add some Teutonic dainty to the evening meal, and on returning found the Englishman alone. Miguele had waited only to torture himself with a last vision, and then departed, after an awkward effort to carry Yorke away with him. That gentleman expected an invitation to dinner and to sleep. From childhood upwards, the parents of beauty had competed for his society, and such an honoured practice could not be broken in Nicaragua. Yorke stayed to dinner and accepted a bed. Two peons fetched his servants and baggage, an errand rewarded with five dollars "strong" apiece. Long before their return he had fascinated the good captain and his little daughter; the shrewd housewife yielded her arms before that lordly extravagance.

Next day Miguele came, very sad and dull, to say good-bye. He found Yorke established as *fil de la maison*, familiar

with all in it, even the dogs and the Indians. Miguele asked for a word with his friend alone, and when that was lightly refused, he seemed to have something he would impart to Captain von Kampf. But his heart failed, and he withdrew, to convey his ragged recruits to Granada.

Yorke stayed a fortnight—one happy dream to Anita. Her parents trusted her, and she spent nearly all day with their guest. He, a man experienced beyond most others even of his sort, found himself harmless before this girl's purity. He could not discover the stain to enlarge, the weak spot where his batteries might make a breach. Anita did not guess his thoughts. She was perfectly happy, suspecting nothing, asking nothing. As deep in love as he could ever be with an innocent girl, Yorke was cool enough to see that this condition of things might go on for months, if not for ever. He could not make his intentions understood, nor take a step towards realising them. Absence has great virtue in maturing a girlish intelligence, and he tried it. Suddenly leaving for Granada, he stayed a month away. In the meanwhile, however, Anita had not been pining, wondering, or reflecting at all. Assured of her hero's return, she spent the hours in thinking of his perfections, the guileless pleasures they had enjoyed, and those to come. Yorke could really spare no further time in Nicaragua, and he savagely admitted that the recent exile had done him no profit. In his disappointment he announced the truth, and on the evening of his return declared that he must leave by the next Pacific steamer. Anita fixed her large eyes on him with the wistful look of a tortured animal. In his light-hearted way, Yorke sustained a monologue for some moments after, and went to bed.

Von Kampf saw the mischief done, but he saw also that there was no remedy. His wife, however, pressed it on him to demand an explanation, and next day, with some pathetic awkwardness, he approached the subject. Yorke was astonished. He could not flatter himself, he could not have ventured to hope, that Miss Anita would feel his absence after knowing him so short a time, &c., &c. With the most graceful and gentlemanly impertinence the poor captain was routed, and Yorke proceeded to pack up. He was going by canoe to San Carlos, there to take the steamer; and he ordered his servants to pick him up at a point they

were acquainted with in the woods. Whilst this news was spreading through the house, Yorke wrote an elegant adieu to Madame von Kampf, patted the dogs, tipped the Indians, stroked the macaws and monkeys, and strolled towards the spot appointed, cigar in mouth. Half way he saw a girlish figure in the path, and his heart leapt. In no simulated passion Yorke ran up. "How good you are, dear Anita!" he cried. "You would not let me go without a word after all!"

"I could not!" she sobbed. "Oh, why do you leave us?"

"I told your father because duty calls me, but to you I tell the truth. I love you, Anita, and I cannot marry you. That is why I go."

"We can love without marrying."

"I want you to myself, all mine, to carry with me, to have always by my side."

"I am yours," she said simply. Yorke knew her better than to misunderstand, but in deceiving himself he hoped to bewilder her. With nothing now to lose, he kissed her hungrily, murmuring words of love, and hurrying her along the path. But Anita's instincts were roused. She held back, red and trembling. "Where would you take me, senor? Let us return." For an instant Yorke thought of carrying her by force, but the difficulties and dangers were too great. With his cheek pressed against hers, he tempted the girl in hot whispers to leave home and honour for love. Anita understood at length—forced herself from his embrace—gave her discovered hero one sad, wild look, and went sobbing down the path. So sweet, so beautiful she was in her despair, that Yorke hesitated for a moment. Noble feelings rose to war with prudence and habit. But trees hid the girl from view, and the struggle ceased.

Months passed into years. Life at the hacienda followed its old round, but Anita no more felt the weariness. A sad heart within answered to the dull monotony without. Since the fairest being of the world she had regretted was treacherous and cruel, better to live alone, beyond wickedness and deceit. And peace came to her at length, when Yorke, supine with fever, weak and timorous, was thinking of his many sins and follies. Anita had never been forgotten. The love he had insulted and cast from him dwelt, like the prayers of childhood, deep in his laden heart. When he arose he took leave of absence, crossed the ocean and the moun-

tains, landed in the forest whence he had embarked five years ago. He hurried by the path well remembered, marking this spot and that, and reached the garden edge. Then, unseen himself, he beheld there, older, but scarcely changed, Captain von Kampf, his wife, Anita, and Don Miguele. No need to ask the relation of these two. Yorke knew the same despair which had filled Anita's heart, as he also turned and went away, without a glance behind.

Donna Anita Arroya y von Kampf is a happy wife; Colonel Yorke is a fast young man of forty preparing himself a disreputable age.

SWEETBRIAR.

How fragrant is the summer dusk
With breath of mignonette and musk,
How dear this hour of rest,
When waning twilight fills with gloom
The shadowy corners of the room
Outlooking to the west.

The blue-eyed prattlers who have played
All day in sunshine and in shade
Among the garden bowers,
Have said good-night—I look around
For scattered toys, and on the ground
I see their faded flowers.

Poor blossoms, plucked with childish haste,
Your summer sweetness ran to waste
In heat of childish play;
A half-blown rose of crimson hue,
Forget-me-nots of heavenly blue,
A tuft of rosy may:

A branch of sweetbriar— Ah, my heart!
The tender tears unbidden start
To weary, world-worn eyes;
I kiss the faded, fragrant spray,
And memories of a bygone day
Before my vision rise.

How often my lost darling wore
The sweetbriar green! She loved it more
Than many-tinted bloom;
It often graced her maiden breast,
Now, planted where she lies at rest,
It beautifies her tomb.

My little love in days of old!
Youth's morning-hour of rose and gold
Comes back to me to-night;
I see her in her girlish grace,
The sunny sweetness of her face,
Her childish robe of white.

I smell the sweetbriar in her hand,
I see the garden where we stand
On England's southern shore,
I hear the rippling streamlet fall,
I hear her laughter musical,
Now silenced evermore.

She was too frail for earth's employ,
Too calm and pure for human joy,
But like the sweetbriar green,
The memory of her gentle life
Makes sweet the years of worldly strife
That lie our lives between.

Thy life and mine, my little love,
My life below, thy life above,
God's love shall re-unite:
I kiss the children's faded spray.
My sweetbriar graceth, far away,
The land of pure delight!

AN EAST END PARISH.

THE East End of London is a world in itself. Between the east and the west is the mighty barrier of the City, which, practically, has the effect of separating the two wings of the east and west. I have known people who have set out from the west to the east as if for a terra incognita. One very useful and zealous member of Parliament, at least, has taken lodgings there for weeks in order that he may explore the country. There are multitudes who know nothing of that uttermost east which lies beyond the east of the City proper. It is not affectation for people to speak of their ignorance of the east of London. Of course we all have an idea of it, and, directly or indirectly, we all have business relations with it. But so far as "society" goes, taking society in the limited sense of a cultivated and leisurely class, there is barely anything that can be called by the name. A single street in the west end of London would probably contain as many persons of such a class as the whole of the east of London. Of recent years those of a better class who have lingered last and longest in the east have now betaken themselves to the West End. There are nevertheless great compensations, of a somewhat peculiar kind, which may even make up for some of the social differences of the neighbourhood. Let me say at once that if the fashionable reader supposes that there is anything miserable and abnormal in the appearance of East End parishes, to the outward eye, at least, he will be mistaken. There are wide, clean streets; there are the regular cab-stand and the most modern facilities of tram and railway, the churches are magnificent, and the laden air is often musical with chimes. There is a general air, perhaps a little deceptive, of cheapness and plenty. There are many points, indeed, in which the east contrasts very favourably with the west. There is much greater spaciousness in the east. The West End is much more crowded. The artisan in a West End parish will pay as much as five or six shillings a week for a room, when in some parts of the East End an artisan can obtain a whole house of four rooms, with a commodious yard, for the same sum. There is far less drunkenness in the east than in the west. There is not so much money or so much temptation. I have often passed at night through the wide silent streets, without hearing a single riotous cry, or meeting a single disorderly

person. Then the East End is not at all unhealthy. "As the wind is frequently in the east we send our smoke west, and see the sun through a thinner cloud of blacks than if we lived in some fashionable street where the sky is yellow from the fumes." Then I need hardly say that for a large part of the East End the river is a vast source of mystery and attraction, with all its shows and all its suggestions. I should remind the reader that beyond the East End proper there is that region—with which I am not dealing now—of "Londoners over the Border," the peculiar condition and wants of which were first generally made known to the public, with the result of much practical good, through the pages of this periodical.

My own knowledge of the East End is of a somewhat peculiar kind. It is the knowledge, such as it is, of a specialist. I have had friends whom I had known at Oxford or in the west end of town, who one time or another have taken up their residences, some of them for many long years together, in the remotest east. In the case of some of them I have hardly ever ceased to wonder how they could accommodate themselves to the East End, for they were men who were intimate with every form of luxury and refinement. They had been boating-men, poets, artists, travellers, scholars, clubmen; and the destiny of each man had led him, curiously enough, to one position or another among the million of Londoners that make up the East End. And we, their old comrades, could only wonder and admire. It so happened that each of these good fellows gave me an invitation to see or stay with him. At first I took little or no notice of such invitations. I did not want to wound their feelings by taking any notice of their altered circumstances. Eventually, however, I gladly availed myself of every one of the invitations, and I now pretty regularly spend some time every year in the East End. I find with gratitude that their quarters are most enjoyable. Their rectories are as spacious as any in the West End; as full of books, and pictures, and music, and pleasant companionship and cheerful talk. Only, it must be owned, that houses such as theirs are rare in this vicinity, and not enough to make up a self-sufficing society. Perhaps they may know some government officials at such places as the Mint or the Tower, a few of the neighbouring clergy, and other professional men. Every now and then their old friends

come and "hunt them up." We discuss fully the old times and the new. We little anticipated that our lines would lead us into the east of London, but, being there, we endeavour to understand it, and to make the most and the best of things.

Now, in speaking of an East End parish, I am principally dealing with the parish with which I am best acquainted, but I shall borrow some touches from some other parishes, and shall specify one or two of them by name. My friend with whom I generally stay while in the east has a noble vicarage. Set down in a fashionable neighbourhood, it would command a noble rental. It was one of the first parsonages built by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and was done on a scale of ambition which they have subsequently abridged. The fine church and the large schools are close at hand. Altogether they constitute a noble group of buildings, which would command attention in any locality. Before the parish church was built, the site was a piece of waste land into which all the rubbish of the parish was shot. There is no want of churches in the East End of London. In fact, I have a notion that the amount of church accommodation is even in excess of the wants of the church-going population. I walk about the parish—it does not take so very long to do it—in order to ascertain the main points of its topography. The streets are full of houses of a very moderate elevation, but with an infinite amount of monotony about them. Apparently they are inhabited by a very respectable and well-to-do class. But, unhappily, each house is let off into several distinct tenements. The vicarage is the only house of its class in the whole parish. It is the only house where there are two or three servants. To about fifteen other houses there might be a single servant; then the whole servant population is accounted for. But these poor people give out of their poverty much more than the rich do out of their abundance.

That vicarage is in itself quite a study. The doors may almost be said to stand open night and day. In its way, it is a sort of business office. It is a sort of Cave of Adullam, to which all those who are perplexed and distressed come as to a refuge. The only times in which the vicar can keep up the old Oxford tastes and pursuits are in the small hours of the morning. The houses of the clergy in big parishes are sometimes almost in a state of siege. I have known servant-girls worn into actual consumption

by having to answer the bell all day. The constant running up and down stairs, and the perpetual draughts, are too much for them. Between the church bell and the door-bell the tinkling is going on all day. All those who are ill in mind, body, or estate, are looking for advice, for money, or for letters of recommendation. Then there are all kinds of classes—for boys, for girls, for grown-up men and women—Bible-women, city missionaries, to be talked to; choir-master and choir to be attended to. To use the old expression, there are many coming and going, and leisure not even to eat is literally verified. At least, the vicar has often very long to wait for his dinner, and when he contrives to feed, he is often exercising the gift of hospitality to all comers. According to him, all his poor parishioners are the most capital people in the world.

Our friends of this parish will not allow anything to be said in derogation of the East End. The poverty is cheerfully admitted, and some credit and applause is even demanded for that stern mother of virtues. We are told triumphantly of the glades and waters of the Victoria Park. We are reminded of the art in the Bethnal Green Museum, and we accordingly go to see them, and do not fail to be suitably impressed. Then there is the London Hospital, which, though not by any means the richest, is nevertheless the largest of all the London hospitals, not to mention the German Hospital at Dalston; and Germans and also Jews are thick in the East End. A recently elected M.P. did himself great good by being able to address German electors in their own language. Then there is the Columbia Market House, the stately edifice of the Baroness Burdett Coutts, which has already gone through so many vicissitudes, not to mention a Children's Hospital, drinking fountains, &c., a canal, and so on. We listen with the deepest interest, and check off each item with a note of admiration. We sympathise with the courage and hopefulness, but when all is told there is little that rises beyond the dead level of monotonous labour. I find it difficult to lash myself into a state of enthusiasm about the localities. The late Mr. E. Denison, M.P., came and lived eight months in the East End. He found the loss of time in travelling from west to east more than he could afford, and the following is the language which he uses: "What is so bad, is the habit and condition of this mass of humanity; its uniform mean level; the absence of anything more civilising than

a grinding organ to raise the ideas beyond the daily bread and beer." I think that if Mr. Denison had enjoyed the same opportunities which have fallen to my lot, he might have taken a more cheerful view of things. He hardly did justice to the ameliorating influences which might be at work in such a district. My friend the vicar every now and then gives what he calls a parish party. A great many of these parties would not fail considerably to enliven the East End. Everything that can make a West End party attractive is carefully provided at the parish party; the programme has been carefully arranged. In the first place there is a real tea, no make-believe or half-tasting out of thin costly cups, as in Mayfair and Belgravia. The main difference between East and West consists in the magnitude and the seriousness of the tea drinking. The cups are often enough breakfast-cups, and I am almost afraid to say how often they are replenished. I am a thirsty being myself, and I can sympathise with my thirsty fellow-creatures. Then all the refreshments have a certain character of solidity as befits the brightest meal of the day. The party is held in the large schoolroom. The floor is prettily carpeted. The walls are decorated with pictures and banners. The tables are covered with prints and photographs. There is a grand piano which faithfully promises some fine music. There is a kind of platform from which we shall have songs, speeches, and recitations. Friends have come from the West End to sing to us and amuse us. I do not think that we have any fine jewellery or splendid dresses; but there are fine eyes, faces the pictures of happiness, and all the attire is exceedingly neat and unaffectedly pretty. Look at the young men and young women. How hard and for what prolonged hours they work! The young men are clerks in offices; the girls are assistants in shops; many of them are immersed in hopeless household cares. How the dull ways of life are brightened and refreshed by such an evening as this! There are really fine ladies from the West End, and the vicar has his following of gentleman friends. All meet together on terms of perfect equality. Acquaintances are made and friendships consolidated. The influences of refinement and sweet civility are everywhere apparent. It is quite clear that the social influence in bringing neighbouring people together, under such pleasant conditions especially, is very healing and healthy in itself. The

workday gear is all put aside; all homely and heavenly influences are at work, to the infinite strength and contentment of the heavily tried parishioners. We are not at all surprised to find first one happy marriage, and then another, happening among the young people. Under such auspices the East Enders develop unexpected capacities for conversation, social enjoyment, and social organisation.

We may look a little more in detail at the organisation of these parishes. We do not speak of the church services and classes, although these are very numerous and carefully adjusted to the needs of a crowded population. The parish itself consists of about seven thousand people, mainly of that class of respectable poor known as small clerks, tradesmen's assistants, machine-workers, and artisans, with a lower population (about two thousand) of the very poorest. In the whole parish there are not more than two persons known to the clergy (and these not rich) able to contribute a pound to any parochial object. In one long dismal lane it was calculated that not half-a-dozen families ever saw beyond the walls of any church or chapel. In fact, the East End clergy for the most part say very frankly that the people do not care very much for the churches and chapels. The idea of physical rest is the basis of their Sunday. They are too tired to put themselves into clean clothes, even on the favourable hypothesis that they have clean clothes to get into. To meet such cases there is the institution of the mission church, which often trains people for the parish church. The mission church is utilised in various ways—for night schools, for instance, mothers' meetings, temperance meetings, &c. The so-called mothers' meeting is comparatively a new institution; it has not been in existence many years, and it has spread with marvellous rapidity throughout the country. The mothers meet in some convenient place to sew; various ladies read to them or converse; twopence in the shilling is allowed them towards the purchase of materials, and they pay the money as may prove most convenient to themselves. The other day I went to such a meeting. Most of the mothers vindicated their claim to the title by having children on their knees or playing about on the floor. One of the ladies had been amusing them by reading aloud Great Expectations. The clergyman drops in occasionally for a chat or for one of the briefest of sermonettes. Profiting by the idea an old clergyman in the suburbs

has opened what he calls a fathers' meeting. He and his conscript fathers get on very cheerfully together. They have beer and tobacco, talk about politics and things in general, and conclude with something religiously good. Besides a mission church there is a mission house; in the mission house there is a residence for school-mistress and for mission women; night schools are held here, and during the winter the soup kitchen is open several times a week.

In some respects this parish has been exceptionally well-off, for the vicar has been enabled to raise some four thousand pounds towards his building and various good works. He is a man of considerable literary reputation, and is often made welcome to preach in West End churches on behalf of his East End congregation. The sums so raised often amount to highly-respectable figures. He has been able to get some five thousand pounds for the good of his people. Then that instrument of social torture, the bazaar, is put into active requisition. There is often a great deal of humbug about bazaars. Fine ladies have the honour and glory of holding stalls, whereas it frequently happens that they merely order in on speculation an immense variety of articles from the tradespeople, to which they affix extravagant prices, and the difference between the buying and the selling price goes to the institution. Now I must say on behalf of the East End bazaar that it is eminently honest; the articles represent an immense amount of hard work, performed by a very large number of willing workers. After the sales of work the great thing necessary is to get rid of the residuum. This point is very skilfully achieved. A *conversazione* is held; there is plenty of tea, music, and conversation, and then something takes place which, to say the truth, is suspiciously like a lottery. It is, however, relieved from being in that category by several circumstances. The sale tickets are sold for a shilling apiece, and each article is determined by the drawing of numbered tickets. But there is an article of some sort or other corresponding to each ticket, in the case of prizes to the extent of tenfold, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold value, and as a whole the value of the articles greatly exceeds the value of all the tickets. One additional reason for the plan is stated by the vicar, "because there will be a great deal of amusement at the oddity and incongruity in many cases of the distribution of the various articles."

Of course our parish has its reading-room, its provident club, its church association. The schoolrooms are so large and good that no room has been found for the operations of the London School Board, which is of course a great saving to the ratepayers. There are seven hundred children, with a large staff of teachers, and the clergy themselves teach five times a week. Then of course the school children have their regular outing, when they go to the neighbouring forests of Epping and Hainault. They go forth in the covered vans, with abundant flags and greenery. And what hours of delicious happiness these are when the poor East End children see the unfamiliar green fields and the leafage, and listen to the songs of birds! For the selected children of the school, conspicuous for their merits, and for the choir, there are still further reaches of travel to be obtained. Perhaps they are taken to Westminster Abbey or the Tower; perhaps they go as far as Richmond, Twickenham, and Teddington to enjoy the pleasures of woodland, meadow, and river. Or they go further still to the lordly towers of Windsor and the Playing Fields of Eton. One very pleasing feature in our East End parish is the immense amount of sympathy and co-operation which is frequently given by the West End to the East End. For instance, a fashionable West End congregation supplies the whole of the funds for the maintenance of a curate in this East End parish. Then Mr. Henry Leslie has several times brought down his choir to sing for a charitable object at Hackney, which is a kind of metropolis for the East End. Moreover, there is a large floating body, good Christians or worthy abstract philanthropists, who look upon the East End as a kind of moral Sahara. Some of these are a little peculiar in their views—"viewiness" being a great characteristic of such people; but there is a broad spirit of Christian charity at the root of such efforts. Anyhow, the wandering Christians come out sometimes in a very effective way.

Mr. J. R. Green, the well-known historian, had a parish in the East End, and has given some very pleasant experiences. We have a very striking account of a lady who went to a low alley in the East End. She entered the little mission-room with a huge basket filled, not with groceries or petticoats, but with roses. There was hardly one pale face among the women bending over their sewing that did not

flush with delight as she distributed her gifts. Soon, as the news spread down the alley, rougher faces peered in at window and door, and great "navvies" and dock-labourers put out their hard fists for a rose, but with the shyness and delight of school-boys. "She was a real lady," was the unanimous verdict of the alley.

One of the most remarkable of such visitants was Mr. Edward Denison, to whom allusion has been made, for some time member for Newark, the son of a bishop, and the nephew of Lord Ossington, Speaker for so many years of the House of Commons. This Mr. Denison appears in every way to have been an astute observer and an admirable man. The letters which he wrote to his friends from Phillpott Street, E., are much deserving of study by all those who desire to improve the hopes and condition of the poor. Though he was elected member for Newark, parliamentary life was little to his tastes. His own tastes lay in the study of the facts of Nature and of society, Nature and human nature. He seems to have thought that the day had gone by when the highest kind of work was to be done in the Houses of Parliament. "If I were perfectly free and independent," he wrote, "what I should really like to do would be to buy one thousand acres or so in Tasmania, farm as much of it as I needed to keep me in food and clothes, and see if I could not by degrees nurse up a stream of English labourers to come and settle round me." He worked away steadily in the East. "I have come to this," he wrote, "that a walk along Piccadilly is a most exhilarating and delightful treat. I don't enjoy it above once in ten days, but therefore with a double zest." His whole heart was with the poor. "What a monstrous thing it is," he exclaimed, "that in the richest country in the world large masses of the population should be condemned annually to starvation and death." Denison thus summed up his programme for the East End. "Build school-houses, pay teachers, give prizes, frame workmen's clubs, help them to help themselves, lend them your brains, but give them no money, except what you sink in such undertakings as above." He set to work strenuously himself. He looked up the sick, and hunted up the nuisances, got hold of the sanitary inspector, and made the workhouse people attend to the proper cases. He found out the very worst court in the parish wherein to carry on his work. The very presence of an honest high-minded gentleman in their

midst proved of the highest service. He turned a Sunday-school into a day-school, and also filled a large room with poor dirty children, who were unable to pay any fees. He got a class of some thirty working-men together on a Wednesday evening, and believing that the poor might understand hard reasoning, although they did not understand hard words, he addressed to them religious reasonings that might be fit for the most cultivated audiences. He also used to teach in a night-school. Mr. Green, who was then the pastor of the East End parish in which he worked, says: "Stern as were his theories, there is hardly a poor home within his district that has not some memory left of the love and tenderness of his personal charity. I hardly like to tell how often I have seen the face of the sick and dying brighten as he drew near, or how the little children, as they flocked out of school, would run to him shouting his name for very glee."

One of the rectors, the Rev. Harry Jones, rector of St. George-in-the-East, has published a very interesting account of his parish in his book, *East and West London*. He speaks of the strong points of interest that belong to his parish. The Commercial Road reveals the forest of masts that indicate how the East End is bound up with the commerce of the world; the Mile End Road dies away into the fair country side, and Epping Forest, now restored to its time-honoured use by the people. Mr. Jones says: "I have never seen a coachman in a wig, or a footman in powder. I have never met a lady on horseback or in a victoria, and though we go much about on foot, such a luxury as a crossing-sweeper is unknown. I tax my memory, but I do not recollect ever to have seen a 'Punch' at St. George's. The strain of work and sentiment of toil is continuous." That same church has a sonorous clock and a fine peal of bells. It is one of the few churches where the curfew is regularly tolled, and as it tolls for a quarter of an hour, it serves as a signal in many workshops for stopping work and turning off the gas. Mr. Jones states that his parish is particularly famous for sugar and wild beasts. The sugar-refining trade, which was once a great staple industry, is now in a state of severe depression, owing to the action of the French Government in encouraging by a bonus the exportation of home-made sugar. Mr. Jamrach's famous establishment of wild beasts is in the parish of St. George. This has been often

described, but new features of interest constantly emerge. The humorous and good-humoured rector tells us that he supposes that he is the only domesticated parson who can ring his bell and send his servant round the corner to buy a lion. If Mr. Jamrach happened to be out of lions, he might make sure of getting some wild beast or other. He reports that one of his curates dropped in at Jamrach's, and came back saying that the stock was low, only four young elephants and a cameleopard, besides the usual supply of monkeys and parrots. Jamrach has always more orders than he can execute. He has customers all over Europe, and the Sultan of Turkey has been one of his largest buyers. The selling value of wild beasts varies very much. You must pay about two hundred pounds for a royal tiger, and three hundred pounds for an elephant; while, I am informed, you may possibly buy a lion for seventy pounds, and a lioness for less. But a first-rate lion sometimes runs to a high figure, say even three hundred pounds. Ourang-outangs come to twenty pounds each, but Barbary apes range from three to four pounds apiece. Mr. Jamrach, however, keeps no priced catalogue of animals, but will supply a written list of their cost if needed. He does not, moreover, "advertise" so much as royally "announce" his animals. Certain papers in London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna occasionally contain a bare statement that such and such beasts and birds are at "Jamrach's," no address being given.

Mr. Jones has some further interesting talk about the special industries of his parish. The London and St. Katharine's Docks are situated in his parish. There is a single cellar which contains six acres of port, sherry, and Madeira, not to mention various others nearly but not quite so immense. One vault has twenty-one miles of alleys of iron rails along which the casks are rolled. The docks abound with rats, and an army of three hundred cats is employed to keep them down. Various of his parishioners are professional rat-catchers. A sovereign is the usual price for clearing a ship of rats. The dock labourers anxiously watch the winds, on which depends the arrival of the ships, by the unloading of which they live. The smell of some of the East End warehouses crammed with aromatic spices is simply delicious. There are many industries peculiar to the east of London. There is one firm which has the largest distillery of

gas-tar in the world, covering seventeen acres, and which does the creosoting of railway-sleepers, turning out some thirty thousand a week. The match trade is a most important industry. It will be remembered how the poor matchmakers went in procession to the Houses of Parliament to protest against Mr. Lowe's idea of extracting profit from light—e luce lucellum. The east of London is one of the great marts of industry for the jute trade. There is a vigorous trade maintained in the item of carrier-pigeons. It is also a famous place for the manufacture of fireworks. Mr. Jones indignantly denies that his parishioners are pauperised hangers-on to the metropolis. He claims that the East End is a manufacturing city in itself, though its proximity to the colossal centre of commerce known as the City of London has so dwarfed it that people in general have very erroneous ideas of its industrial importance. A mass of testimony goes to exhibit the east of London as one of the greatest districts of industry in the land, not as dependent on the rest of the metropolis, but as sharing with it the honour of being the greatest centre of work and commerce in the world.

I have marked many interesting cases which I have noted in my observations in eastern parishes. One of my East End vicars took me over his mission-house, which was really extraordinary for the variety of uses to which he put it. For four nights in the week it is opened as a working-man's club. There is a smoking-room, but the institution has not sufficient strength of mind to stand beer. There are tea, coffee, and cocoa to any extent. The institution appeared to be pretty equally shared between the purposes of reading and feeding. Sometimes a hundred working-men will come together for a meat tea, paying a shilling a head, and bringing wives and sweethearts with them. There is plenty of music. Sometimes the vicar and curates will each give a song and the guests will join in the chorus. Sometimes three hundred people will sit down to a tea-fight. Many thousand dinners are given in the course of the year under the name of invalids' dinners. The dinner is a substantial plain meal: meat, vegetables, bread, and beer. Each dinner-ticket costs two-pence, the rest being made up by voluntary subscriptions. Old people rank as invalids, and on one day of the week children are allowed to dine. Of course there are

mothers' meetings here. There is a clothing club and a lending club, and the ladies make clothing which may be bought at a reduced rate by the poor. The mission house is often a busy hive, filled throughout. On the ground floor the men are reading newspapers or attending to bagatelle, or some other games; upstairs the clergyman has his bible-class or the ladies have their sewing parties; and in the rear the master and matron of the institution are looking after the material wants of the people.

There are many other phases of East End life which we might discuss. There are the Spitalfields weavers. There are the labourers in the docks. There are the toilers of the river, the mudlarks, of whom descriptive writers have told us so much. My own acquaintance has been not with the lowest and most picturesque stratum of the east, but with the steady, toiling, unromantic and respectable classes. Of course it might be possible to draw a very different picture of life in the East End—pictures of profligacy, crime, discord, and misery. These undoubtedly exist, and ought not to be omitted or slurred over. Mr. Jones in his interesting book describes the court in which, in *Edwin Drood*, Jasper used to take his opium-smoke: "This was the place. The old crone who received him, well known as 'Lascar Sal,' lived, or lived till quite lately, in a court just beyond the end of our churchyard. And I know the 'John Chinaman,' of whom she was jealous as a rival in her deadly trade. He had a ground floor in the same court, and a friend of mine who came to prowl about St. George's-in-the-East, could not complete his experience without going in to have a few whiffs at the opium-pipe in his den." Mr. Denison describes his experiences in Petticoat Lane and Rag Fair: "You never saw such places; humanity swarms there in such quantity, of such a quality, and in such streets, that I can only liken it to the trembling mass of maggots in a lump of carrion." But the novelist, the clergyman, and the Member of Parliament would withal allow that, while what is abnormal and exaggerated yields the readiest and most picturesque material for the writer, yet perhaps deeper and more intense interest belongs to the "simple annals of the poor," their constant struggle for existence, and the means that are taken to relieve the monotony of their dark lot, and to gild it with the halo of a better hope hereafter.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXVIII. HAROLD SEES FACES IN THE SMOKE OF HIS CIGAR.

"YOUR pardon, gentlemen."

It was the captain of the vessel who broke in upon their conversation.

"What have you to say, captain?"

"I await your orders; I can get safe anchorage here. Is our voyage at an end?"

"For the present. Yonder lies the Silver Isle—a fair land."

"It seems so; but I have seen as fair, at a distance, that turned out foul upon a nearer acquaintance."

"This will not. Let go your anchor; to-morrow morning I shall want a boat to convey one of my servants ashore with a letter to the islanders. There is nothing to fear from them; the people are not cannibals."

"Maybe not; but you tell me they have no king."

"The greater fortune," said Harold, "for the king they have not. Having no king, they cannot hunt one to death."

"Our king lives, and is safe."

"In banishment," said Mauvain, gloomily, "as we are. Better to have died, sword in hand. Captain, it is likely you will have to put up with us a day or two longer."

"The later we part company, the better I shall be pleased."

Mauvain, with a nod, dismissed the captain, and turned to Harold.

"I am almost at a loss what to say to the islanders, and to whom to address my missive."

"The letter you gave me on my visit to the isle was addressed to one Sebastian. A stately man, whose white hair flowed over his shoulders. By this time, doubtless, gathered to his forefathers. I can suggest a younger man."

"Name him."

"Ranf the hunchback."

Mauvain frowned. "There lies an obstacle."

Harold laughed blithely. "My very thought, Mauvain. If my memory does not deceive me, you begged the islanders to accept the hunchback as a trust in kindly remembrance of yourself. Doubtless they appreciated your generosity in having sent them such a Caliban."

"And something worse," said Mauvain, "added to his hunchship."

"There could be nothing worse in human form."

"There is no saying. He had a daughter, remember, of whom you gave me a frightful description. If she has fulfilled the promise of her youth, we may find not only a Caliban, but a younger Sycorax on the Silver Isle. Would you believe, Harold, that this man once told me a woman loved him? It is inconceivable, and yet I must do the hunchback the justice to say that I believe him not to be guilty of falsehood. You are silent, Harold. Are you thinking of the hunchback's daughter, and dreading her spells? For by this time, if she live (it may mercifully have happened that they are both removed from mortal spheres) she is a mistress of all that is foul in nature. I can see her already, with bent back, searching the woods for poisonous herbs for purposes of witchcraft. The account you gave me of your voyage hither in such company is very vivid in my mind: all his hideousness reproduced in her, a very monkey in mischief, body as twisted, hair unkempt, limbs crooked——"

"Hold!" cried Harold. "Be a little merciful. There are fair sins as ill-begotten."

"Make me," continued Mauvain, appearing to take pleasure in the subject, "a group in stone of this interesting couple. Do you remember my suggesting it to you? And look forward with a prophet's eye, I said, and cut the figures as they will be in twenty years. You performed the task well; you have the soul of an artist, Harold, and when you are interested in a work, excellence is the result. You modelled Ranf to the life, an old man whose likeness lives only in the being we know, and projecting your mind into the future, you created in stone the figure of a woman so startling in its weird ugliness that it would have made the fortune of a sculptor had the critics dealt with it. Ranf and this hideous Evangeline side by side, stooping over a pool of water. There is no mistaking that the repulsive pair are father and daughter. It was a trick, Harold, but most truly original, that you should have hewn out of the marble over which these creatures are bending, a great hollow, with a floor of glass, so that, being filled with clear water, the reflection of the two faces is plainly seen. This marvellously original Evangeline shall be set up in the grounds of my house on the Silver Isle——"

"Impossible!" interrupted Harold. "The

iconoclasts of our unhappy country have by this time criticised it with their hammers."

"It happens otherwise, fortunately. Foreseeing what was coming, and thinking it not unlikely that we should have to fly the country, I had certain household treasures packed up and conveyed to the seaside. They are in the hold of this vessel at the present moment, and your Ranf and Evangeline among them. I shall have an opportunity, if the interesting couple are alive, of comparing living flesh with dumb stone, and of proving what kind of a prophet you were when you designed the group."

"It is scarcely worth while," said Harold, with a slight tremor in his voice, "to inflict humiliation upon me."

"Humiliation, Harold! Explain."

"It is not pleasant to look, in our ripe age, upon the mistakes of our earlier years. My life—in other respects, as well as in that of an artist—has been a failure. I am painfully conscious of this lamentable conclusion. The group you speak of may be classed among youth's extravagances, which serve their purpose for the time (not in the healthiest way), and then are best forgotten."

"You underrate yourself, Harold. Had you possessed industry and application——"

"Two words, Mauvain, not to be found in my vocabulary."

"Nor in mine; but I did not need them. Had you possessed these qualities, you would have shone in the world with even a brighter light than you have shone in private circles. For it has been said of you frequently that you are an artist of a divine mould, and that you belong, of your own force and power, to the race of those who have made art a religion. You have in you the true fire, and the world would have hailed you as a prophet inspired. Your indolence stopped the way of your advancement. The world has lost a leader; your friends have been the gainers."

"You are generous in your praise; give me a further exhibition of your generosity."

"I can deny you nothing, Harold."

"I thank you. You will, then, present me with the group of Ranf and Evangeline, which, indeed and in truth, is a reproach to the art I worship. Let me be judged by what I believe is worthy of me, not by what I know will tend to lower me,"

"If art workers were their own critics, they would condemn their most perfect productions. You would destroy your child."

"It is a crime, and I do not care to be perpetually reminded of it."

"Pardon the seeming indelicacy of the remark; I paid you for the group, Harold."

The sculptor winced, as though a lash had been laid across his shoulders. "You paid me liberally, Mauvain."

"It is mine, therefore, and I am its owner, judge, and critic. You have a perverse sensitiveness. You have done nothing as fine as this. No, Harold, I cannot give it you."

"Sell it to me, then," said Harold, with earnestness.

"I am not," said Mauvain, somewhat haughtily, and yet with a touch of amusement in his tone, "a dealer in curiosities. I cannot sell the group. Dismiss the subject. Come with me to the saloon, and assist me in my letter to the islanders."

The ship lay at anchor that night. The sailors sang their sea-songs, the rough melodies of which became softened as they floated over the waters. With the moonlight on it, the isle looked like a fairy isle; the soft waves lapped the shore, along which sauntered here and there a couple in their springtime. The future was theirs, and their hearts were light; no shadows rested on their lives. Harold remained upon the deck, gazing on the isle, and thinking of the past. His thoughts travelled in these grooves:

"Could we but tear some leaves out of the book! Or, better still, could we destroy the book itself! Turn over the pages, Harold. What do you see?"

"Wasted days and nights; mis-spent endeavour; masses of violent colour; harmony robbed of sweetness; beauty out of proportion, such as weak-brained æsthetics love to draw; tangles of artificial flowers; painted women; men with the souls of waiters; false protestations.

"What a jumble of discordances! Struggling one with another, not for the purpose of arriving at some sort of order and decency, but for the purpose of asserting an enjoyment of the hours which becomes pain when the touchstone of true manliness is applied to it. Even at the time its worst pages were written, some glimmering of this entered my mind.

"A witch's revel. The beauties of nature distorted and insulted, and mud flung upon purity. Miracles on every side. Spring's tenderness; summer's perfectness; autumn's peacefulness; winter's white loveliness;—all mocked, derided, belittled (if

Nature can be) by false refinement or coarse indulgence.

"A creditable production, such a book, for a mortal endowed with reason, imagination, and an indolent affectation of ideality. If this life were all, it would but be adding wasted time to wasted time to occupy the moments in regret and self-reproach. In such a belief, every hour should be made to yield its measure of enjoyment; it would be an intellectual exercise of opportunity to exact this tribute from time which flies or lags according to our humour. But it is not all; we are something higher than beasts of the field.

"Herein lies the appalling shadow. The phantom of your higher self rises before you, and with sad eyes demands an account.

"I render it. Not mine, all the fault. My boat has drifted on, and I have not striven to direct its course. I am wrong; there was a time when a spirit on the shore seemed to say: 'There is in life an earnest, lovely field before you; there is in life a sweeter hope, in whose light your higher aspirations shall be realised; love shall give you earnestness and courage.' But the voice I seemed to hear was of my own creation. The spirit stood before me, but its tongue was mute; its heart never responded to mine.

"So much for the past. Let it go. Retain only what is pure and sweet. The future still is yours.

"How many years ago is it since I visited this fairy isle? I have kept no count of time. The memory of the few hours I spent upon its shores lingers with me like a pleasant dream. The child I brought hither, in strange uncongenial society, is a woman now, fair and beautiful. There is no doubt of it. 'Princess of the Silver Isle, I kiss your fairy fingers.' My very words come back to me. She gave me her hand, with nature's true grace, and so I left her.

"Were I a painter, I would draw the picture. The child, the hunchback, and I. The islanders standing a little apart, the reapers looking on. All the accessories perfect. But without being a painter, I can draw Evangeline's likeness. No Scyrox, Mauvain. The loveliest Miranda. If I had such a spirit-slave as Ariel to show me this Miranda in her living form!

"Dreams, Harold! will you never be practical? I answer myself. I think—never."

As Harold gazed and mused, the night

deepened, and the lovers left the sea-shore for the inland.

At midnight Mauvain came on deck, smoking a cigar, and walked to where Harold was lying on his side, with the moonlight streaming on him.

"Asleep, Harold?"

The sculptor did not reply; he had fallen asleep, with tender fancies in his mind. His position was a dangerous one; his form swayed to and fro with the rocking of the ship in the swell of the waves, and a sudden lurch would have sent him into the sea. Mauvain stooped over him and awoke him. Harold opened his eyes languidly.

"Cruel to wake me," he murmured. "I was dreaming of another world."

"You might have been in it," said Mauvain, "but for me. A deeper swelling of a chance wave, and you would have glided into the sea."

"And so through water to another state of being. An easy mode of transition, which one would choose if one had the power; but there consciousness sets in. It is dangerous, too, they say, to sleep with the moonlight on your face; and I have been doing so. Madness might visit the sleeper, a different kind of madness from that which we endeavour to hide from the knowledge of the world. Give me a cigar, Mauvain. So, you did not wish to lose me."

"Life on the isle," replied Mauvain, imitating unconsciously the indolent tone of his friend, "would be intolerable without a kindred soul such as yours to sympathise with."

"Or play upon. Eh, Mauvain? Confess. You have used men."

"Having the right."

"Undoubtedly. Who has ever disputed it? You should have been a king, and your right would have been divine. Notice how still the air is. It scarcely disturbs the smoke from our cigars, which of its own volition ascends and spreads until it is merged into invisible ether. It is pretty while it lasts, and gives ample time for fancy in the way of faces. Here is a face; Ranf's. It is impossible for you to see it; wise one for yourself. My Ranf twists and grins and grins with impish malice. Ranf as a strong man—strong in character, I mean. Between you and him some passages have taken place. He saved your life, I believe?"

"He rendered me service at a critical moment. I paid him for it."

"As you always do. You pay, and there's an end. Blood, brain, heart, and so bought and fairly paid for—even the soul may be included, for it is customary to pay for prayer. What can have induced a being like Ranf to jeopardise his life for you? He is not too fond of his betters."

"You forget, he was my servant."

"He is free now. All men are equal on the Silver Isle. A state of things we have flown from; I never thought of that. So! Ranf's face has curled itself away—not the thinnest line remains. And here comes a perfect cluster of faces, women's faces, all beautiful. A vision of the women of the isle, enchanting in the prospect it holds out. To think that smoke-colour should be capable of such variety and vividness! I am becoming resigned to the loss of a worn-out world. There was nothing new in it, Mauvain; day after day, week after week, the same. Here we have the chance of something novel in sensation."

"What you sigh for," said Mauvain, in a tone of quiet contempt, "may happen, and then you will taste a joy it is impossible I can ever have enjoyed."

"You have a faithful memory. This jangle of faces has disappeared, and in the curling wreaths I see one whose counterpart cannot be found in the Silver Isle, it is so strangely familiar. What name to attach to it!—there have been so many? Whose name? Whose name? Am I grown suddenly old that I cannot recall the name of one so fair?"

"As you say, Harold, there are so many."

"But this one, of all others. Simple, childlike, with no knowledge of the world, friendless and alone. Tut! tut! I have it on my tongue, and it will not come."

"Why trouble yourself about her? She has forgotten you, as you have forgotten her."

"I have never forgotten her; but age plays tricks. Do you not find it so? You are older than I, and therefore a better judge. Ah! I have it. Clarice!"

Mauvain flicked the ash off his cigar. "Clarice. Yes, she was fair, and may have deserved all your encomiums."

"She did, as you know."

"You are dictatorial, without possessing the right. I never had faith in woman."

"I am in a strange mood, Mauvain; I cannot brook contradiction, Clarice was all I have described."

"To please you, granted. What then?"

"Merely that the age of chivalry never existed, for the reason that men are men."

"And women, women. You have finished your rhapsody, I presume."

"I extinguish it with this cigar." He threw his lighted cigar into the sea. The light flickered for a moment, and then was extinguished. "And so, its brief joy slain, it drifts as I and others have drifted, into the unknown. Good-night, Mauvain."

"Good-night, mad-brain."

The next morning a boat was rowed to shore, and a messenger landed, bearing a letter, which he was instructed to deliver to some person in authority. It ran as follows :

"DEAR FRIENDS OF THE SILVER ISLE.—A cruel destiny compels me once more to seek shelter among you. My country is in the hands of a lawless rabble, who have torn down the sacred symbols of authority. Had opportunity offered, I would have chosen to die by the side of my king, but I was debarred that happiness. Compelled to fly—the choice of an honourable death not being mine—my thoughts travelled to the peaceful land in which I passed some happy years. I feel that I shall be welcome. The house I built upon your isle will shelter me ; I desire to retire to it, and seek, for a little while, rest and seclusion ; and when my mind, disturbed by recent events, has recovered its balance, I shall mix among you as of old, and take my share in the duties of citizenship. I have with me a few relics which I saved from fortune's wreck, and these I shall convey to my house when it is ready to receive me.—In all good will, dear friends,
"MAUVAIN."

The letter was read and commented upon, and the messenger was questioned.

"Is Mauvain alone?"

"No ; he has friends and servants with him."

"Then it is for others, as well as for himself, he desires a welcome?"

To this the messenger made no reply.

"Mauvain speaks of relics he has brought with him. Of what do they consist?"

"Furniture, family memorials, and such-like."

"Acquaint us with your full instructions."

"Simply to receive your reply, and convey it to Mauvain."

"Does he know that his house is occupied?"

"I cannot say."

After a long deliberation, at which the messenger was not allowed to be present, the following letter was sent by his hands to Mauvain.

"From the inhabitants of the Silver Isle to Mauvain :

"We recognise the claim you have upon us. You own a house and land in our isle, and we have also treasure of yours which we are ready to pay over to you. Your house has been in the occupation of a family named Sylvester ; it is in their occupation now. A few days must necessarily elapse before they can shift their home ; in the interval we offer you the best accommodation at our disposal. Let us know your pleasure."

When this letter was read upon ship-board, Harold made a wry face.

"It smacks of constraint," he said ; "there is a flavour of vinegar about it."

But Mauvain professed to be satisfied with its tone, saying it was sufficient for him that his rights were recognised ; and he informed the islanders, through his messenger, that his pleasure was to remain on board ship until his house was empty, and ready to receive him.

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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXXVII. "MABEL, GOOD-BYE."

WHEN Tregear first came to town with his arm in a sling, and bandages all round him—in order that he might be formally accepted by the duke—he had himself taken to one other house besides the house in Carlton Terrace. He went to Belgrave Square, to announce his fate to Lady Mabel Grex—but Lady Mabel Grex was not there. The earl was ill at Brighton, and Lady Mabel had gone down to nurse him. The old woman who came to him in the hall told him that the earl was very ill—he had been attacked by the gout, but in spite of the gout, and in spite of the doctors, he had insisted on being taken to his club. Then he had been removed to Brighton, under the doctor's advice, chiefly in order that he might be kept out of the way of temptation. Now he was supposed to be very ill indeed. "My lord is so imprudent!" said the old woman, shaking her old head in real unhappiness. For though the earl had been a tyrant to everyone near him, yet when a poor woman becomes old it is something to have a tyrant to protect her. "My lord" always had been imprudent. Tregear knew that it had been the theory of my lord's life that to eat and drink and die was better than to abstain and live. Then Tregear wrote to his friend as follows:

"MY DEAR MABEL,—I am up in town as you will perceive, although I am still in a helpless condition and hardly able to write even this letter. I called to-day, and was very sorry to hear so bad an account of your father. Had I been able to travel I should have come down to you.

When I am able I will do so if you would wish to see me. In the meantime pray tell me how he is, and how you are.

"My news is this. The duke has accepted me. It is great news to me, and I hope will be acceptable to you. I do believe that if ever a friend has been anxious for a friend's welfare you have been anxious for mine—as I have been and ever shall be for yours.

"Of course this thing will be very much to me. I will not speak now of my love for the girl who is to become my wife. You might again call me Romeo. Nor do I like to say much of what may now be pecuniary prospects. I did not ask Mary to become my wife because I supposed she would be rich. But I could not have married her or anyone else who had not money. What are the duke's intentions I have not the slightest idea, nor shall I ask him. I am to go down to Matching at Easter, and shall endeavour to have some time fixed. I suppose the duke will say something about money. If he does not, I shall not.

"Pray write to me at once, and tell me when I shall see you.—Your affectionate cousin,

F. O. TREGEAR."

In answer to this there came a note in a very few words. She congratulated him—not very warmly—but expressed a hope that she might see him soon. But she told him not to come to Brighton. The earl was better, but very cross, and she would be up in town before long.

Towards the end of the month it became suddenly known in London that Lord Grex had died at Brighton. There was a Garter to be given away, and everybody was filled with regret that such an ornament to the peerage should have departed from them.

The Conservative papers remembered how excellent a politician he had been in his younger days, and the world was informed that the family of Grex of Grex was about the oldest in Great Britain of which authentic records were in existence. Then there came another note from Lady Mabel to Tregear. "I shall be in town on the 31st in the old house, with Miss Cassewary, and will see you if you can come on the 1st. Come early; at eleven, if you can."

On the day named and at the hour fixed he was in Belgrave Square. He had known this house since he was a boy, and could well remember how, when he first entered it, he had thought with some awe of the grandeur of the earl. The earl had then not paid much attention to him, but he had become very much taken by the grace and good-nature of the girl who had owned him as a cousin. "You are my Cousin Frank," she had said; "I am so glad to have a cousin." He could remember the words now as though they had been spoken only yesterday. Then there had quickly grown to be friendship between him and this, as he thought, sweetest of all girls. At that time he had just gone to Eton; but before he left Eton they had sworn to love each other. And so it had been, and the thing had grown, till at last, just when he had taken his degree, two matters had been settled between them; the first was that each loved the other irretrievably, irrevocably, passionately; the second, that it was altogether out of the question that they should ever marry each other.

It was but fair to Tregear to say that this last decision originated with the lady. He had told her that he certainly would hold himself engaged to marry her at some future time; but she had thrown this aside at once. How was it possible, she said, that two such beings, brought up in luxury, and taught to enjoy all the good things of the world, should expect to live and be happy together without an income? He offered to go to the bar; but she asked him whether he thought it well that such a one as she should wait say a dozen years for such a process. "When the time came, I should be an old woman and you would be a wretched man." She released him—declaring her own purpose of marrying well; and then, though there had been a moment in which her own assurance of her own love had been passionate enough, she went so far as to tell him that she was heart-whole. "We have been two foolish children, but

we cannot be children any longer," she said. "There must be an end of it."

What had hitherto been the result of this the reader knows—and Tregear knew also. He had taken the privilege given to him, and had made so complete a use of it that he had in truth transferred his heart as well as his allegiance. Where is the young man who cannot do so; how few are there who do not do so when their first fit of passion has come on them at one-and-twenty? And he had thought that she would do the same. But gradually he found that she had not done so, did not do so, could not do so! When she first heard of Lady Mary she had not reprimanded him, but she could not keep herself from showing the bitterness of her disappointment. Though she would still boast of her own strength and of her own purpose, yet it was too clear to him that she was wounded and very sore. She would have liked him to remain single, at any rate till she herself were married. But the permission had been hardly given before he availed himself of it. And then he talked to her not only of the brilliancy of his prospects—which she could have forgiven—but of his love—his love!

Then she had refused one offer after another, and he had known it all. There was nothing in which she was concerned that she did not tell him. Then Silverbridge had come across her, and she had determined that he should be her husband. She had been nearly successful—so nearly that at moments she had felt sure of success. But the prize had slipped from her through her own fault. She knew well enough that it was her own fault. When a girl submits to play such a game as that, she should not stand on too nice scruples. She had told herself this many a time since—but the prize was gone.

All this Tregear knew, and, knowing it, almost dreaded the coming interview. He could not without cruelty have avoided her. Had he done so before he could not have continued to do so now, when she was left alone in the world. Her father had not been much to her, but still his presence had enabled her to put herself before the world as being somebody. Now she would be almost nobody. And she had lost her rich prize, while he—out of the same treasury as it were—had won his!

The door was opened to him by the same old woman, and he was shown, at a

funereal pace, up into the drawing-room which he had known so well. He was told that Lady Mabel would be down to him directly. As he looked about him he could see that already had been commenced that work of division of spoil, which is sure to follow the death of most of us. Things were already gone which used to be familiar to his eyes, and the room, though not dismantled, had been deprived of its little prettinesses and was ugly.

In about ten minutes she came down to him—with so soft a step that he would not have been aware of her entrance had he not seen her form in the mirror. Then, when he turned round to greet her, he was astonished by the blackness of her appearance. She looked as though she had become ten years older since he had last seen her. As she came up to him she was grave and almost solemn in her gait, but there was no sign of any tears. Why should there have been a tear? Women weep, and men too, not from grief but from emotion. Indeed, grave and slow as was her step, and serious, almost solemn, as was her gait, there was something of a smile on her mouth as she gave him her hand. And yet her face was very sad, declaring to him too plainly something of the hopelessness of her heart. "And so the duke has consented," she said. He had told her that in his letter, but, since that, her father had died and she had been left he did not as yet know how far impoverished, but, he feared, with no pleasant worldly prospects before her.

"Yes, Mabel; that I suppose will be settled. I have been so shocked to hear all this."

"It has been very sad—has it not? Sit down, Frank. You and I have a good deal to say to each other now that we have met. It was no good your going down to Brighton. He would not have seen you, and at last I never left him."

"Was Percival there?" She only shook her head. "That was dreadful."

"It was not Percival's fault. He would not see him; nor till the last hour or two would he believe in his own danger. Nor was he ever frightened for a moment—not even then."

"Was he good to you?"

"Good to me! Well—he liked my being there. Poor papa! It had gone so far with him that he could not be good to any one. I think that he felt that it would be unmanly not to be the same to the end."

"He would not see Percival."

"When it was suggested he would only ask what good Percival could do him. I did send for him at last, in my terror, but he did not see his father alive. When he did come he only told me how badly his father had treated him! It was very dreadful!"

"I did so feel for you."

"I am sure you did, and will. After all, Frank, I think that the pious godly people have the best of it in this world. Let them be ever so covetous, ever so false, ever so hard-hearted, the mere fact that they must keep up appearances makes them comfortable to those around them. Poor papa was not comfortable to me. A little hypocrisy, a little sacrifice to the feelings of the world, may be such a blessing."

"I am sorry that you should feel it so."

"Yes; it is sad. But you—everything is smiling with you! Let us talk about your plans."

"Another time will do for that. I had come to hear about your own affairs."

"There they are," she said, pointing round the room. "I have no other affairs. You see that I am going from here."

"And where are you going?" She shook her head. "With whom will you live?"

"With Miss Cass—two old maids together! I know nothing further."

"But about money? That is if I am justified in asking."

"What would you not be justified in asking? Do you not know that I would tell you every secret of my heart—if my heart had a secret. It seems that I have given up what was to have been my fortune. There was a claim of twelve thousand pounds on Grex. But I have abandoned it."

"And there is nothing."

"There will be scrapings they tell me—unless Percival refuses to agree. This house is mortgaged—but not for its value. And there are some jewels. But all that is detestable—a mere grovelling among mean hundreds; whereas you—you will soar among—"

"Oh, Mabel! do not say hard things to me."

"No, indeed! why should I—I who have been preaching that comfortable doctrine of hypocrisy? I will say nothing hard. But I would sooner talk of your good things than of my evil ones."

"I would not."

"Then you must talk about them for my sake. How was it that the duke came round at last?"

"I hardly know. She sent for me."

"A fine high-spirited girl. These Pallisers have more courage about them than one expects from their outward manner. Silverbridge has plenty of it."

"I remember telling you he could be obstinate."

"And I remember that I did not believe you. Now I know it. He has that sort of pluck which enables a man to break a girl's heart—or to destroy a girl's hopes—without wincing. He can tell a girl to her face that she may go to the mischief for him. There are so many men who can't do that, from cowardice, though their hearts be ever so well inclined. 'I have changed my mind.' There is something great in the courage of a man who can say that to a woman in so many words. Most of them, when they escape, escape by lies and subterfuges. Or they run away and won't allow themselves to be heard of. They trust to a chapter of accidents, and leave things to arrange themselves. But when a man can look a girl in the face with those seemingly soft eyes, and say with that seemingly soft mouth, 'I have changed my mind,' though she would look him dead in return if she could, still she must admire him."

"Are you speaking of Silverbridge now?"

"Of course I am speaking of Silverbridge. I suppose I ought to hide it all and not to tell you. But as you are the only person I do tell, you must put up with me. Yes; when I taxed him with his falsehood—for he had been false—he answered me with those very words! 'I have changed my mind.' He could not lie. To speak the truth was a necessity to him, even at the expense of his gallantry, almost of his humanity."

"Has he been false to you, Mabel?"

"Of course he has. But there is nothing to quarrel about, if you mean that. People do not quarrel now about such things. A girl has to fight her own battle with her own pluck and her own wits. As with these weapons she is generally stronger than her enemy, she succeeds sometimes although everything else is against her. I think I am courageous, but his courage beat mine. I craned at the first fence. When he was willing to swallow my bait, my hand was not firm enough to strike the hook in his jaws. Had I not quailed then I think I should have—'had him.'"

"It is horrid to hear you talk like this." She was leaning over from her seat, looking, black as she was, so much older than her wont, with something about her of that unworldly serious thoughtfulness which a mourning garb always gives. And yet her words were so worldly, so unfeminine!

"I have got to tell the truth to somebody. It was so, just as I have said. Of course I did not love him. How could I love him after what has passed? But there need have been nothing much in that. I don't suppose that dukes' eldest sons often get married for love."

"Miss Boncassen loves him."

"I dare say the beggar's daughter loved King Cophetua. When you come to distances such as that, there can be love. The very fact that a man should have descended so far in quest of beauty—the flattery of it alone—will produce love. When the angels came after the daughters of men, of course the daughters of men loved them. The distance between him and me is not great enough to have produced that sort of worship. There was no reason why Lady Mabel Grex should not be good enough wife for the son of the Duke of Omnium."

"Certainly not."

"And therefore I was not struck as by the shining of a light from heaven. I cannot say I loved him. Frank, I am beyond worshipping even an angel from heaven!"

"Then I do not know that you could blame him," he said very seriously.

"Just so; and as I have chosen to be honest I have told him everything. But I had my revenge first."

"I would have said nothing."

"You would have recommended—delicacy! No doubt you think that women should be delicate, let them suffer what they may. A woman should not let it be known that she has any human nature in her. I had him on the hip, and for a moment I used my power. He had certainly done me a wrong. He had asked for my love, and with the delicacy which you commend, I had not at once grasped at all that such a request conveyed. Then, as he told me so frankly, 'he changed his mind!' Did he not wrong me?"

"He should not have raised false hopes."

"He told me that—he had changed his mind. I think I loved him then as nearly as ever I did—because he looked me full in the face. Then I told him I had never cared for him, and that he need have nothing on his conscience. But I doubt whether

he was glad to hear it. Men are so vain! I have talked too much of myself. And so you are to be the duke's son-in-law. And she will have hundreds of thousands."

"Thousands, perhaps, but I do not think very much about it. I feel that he will provide for her."

"And that you, having secured her, can creep under his wing like an additional ducal chick. It is very comfortable. The duke will be quite a Providence to you. I wonder that all young gentlemen do not marry heiresses—it is so easy. And you have got your seat in Parliament too! Oh, your luck! When I look back upon it all it seems so hard to me! It was for you—for you that I used to be anxious. Now it is I who have not an inch of ground to stand upon." Then he approached her and put out his hand to her. "No," she said, putting both her hands behind her back, "for Heaven's sake let there be no tenderness. But is it not cruel? Think of my advantages at that moment when you and I agreed that our paths should be separate. My fortune then had not been made quite shipwreck by my father and brother. I had before me all that society could offer. I was called handsome and clever. Where was there a girl more likely to make her way to the top?"

"You may do so still."

"No, no; I cannot. And you at least should not tell me so. I did not know then the virulence of the malady which had fallen on me. I did not know then that, because of you, other men would be abhorrent to me. I thought that I was as easy-hearted as you have proved yourself."

"How cruel you can be."

"Have I done anything to interfere with you? Have I said a word even to that young lad, when I might have said a word. Yes; to him I did say something; but I waited, and would not say it while a word could hurt you. Shall I tell you what I told him? Just everything that has ever happened between you and me."

"You did?"

"Yes; because I saw that I could trust him. I told him because I wanted him to be quite sure that I had never loved him. But, Frank, I have put no spoke in your wheel. There has not been a moment since you told me of your love for this rich young lady in which I would not have helped you had help been in my power. Whomever I may have harmed, I have never harmed you."

"Am I not as clear from blame towards you?"

"No, Frank. You have done me the terrible evil of ceasing to love me."

"It was at your own bidding."

"Certainly! But if I were to bid you to cut my throat, would you do it?"

"Was it not you who decided that we could not wait for each other?"

"And should it not have been for you to decide that you would wait?"

"You also would have married."

"It almost angers me that you should not see the difference. A girl unless she marries becomes nothing, as I have become nothing now. A man does not want a pillar on which to lean. A man, when he has done as you had done with me, and made a girl's heart all his own, even though his own heart had been flexible and plastic as yours is, should have been true to her, at least for a while. Did it never occur to you that you owed something to me?"

"I have always owed you very much."

"There should have been some touch of chivalry if not of love to make you feel that a second passion should have been postponed for a year or two. You could wait without growing old. You might have allowed yourself a little space to dwell—I was going to say on the sweetness of your memories. But they were not sweet, Frank; they were not sweet to you."

"These rebukes, Mabel, will rob them of their sweetness—for a time."

"It is gone; all gone," she said, shaking her head—"gone from me because I have been so easily deserted; gone from you because the change has been so easy to you. How long was it, Frank, after you had left me before you were basking happily in the smiles of Lady Mary Palliser?"

"It was not very long—as months go."

"Say days, Frank."

"I have to defend myself, and I will do so with truth. It was not very long—as months go; but why should it have been less long, whether for months or days? I had to cure myself of a wound."

"To put a plaister on a scratch, Frank."

"And the sooner a man can do that the more manly he is. Is it a sign of strength to wail under a sorrow that cannot be cured—or of truth to perpetuate the appearance of a woe?"

"Has it been an appearance with me?"

"I am speaking of myself now. I am

driven to speak of myself by the bitterness of your words. It was you who decided."

"You accepted my decision easily."

"Because it was based not only on my unfitness for such a marriage, but on yours. When I saw that there would be perhaps some years of misery for you, of course I accepted your decision. The sweetness had been very sweet to me."

"Oh, Frank, was it ever sweet to you?"

"And the triumph of it had been very great. I had been assured of the love of her who among all the high ones of the world seemed to me to be the highest. Then came your decision. Do you really believe that I could abandon the sweetness, that I could be robbed of my triumph, that I could think I could never again be allowed to put my arm round your waist, never again to feel your cheek close to mine, that I should lose all that had seemed left to me among the gods, without feeling it?"

"Frank, Frank," she said, rising to her feet, and stretching out her hands as though she were going to give him back all these joys.

"Of course I felt it. I did not then know what was before me." When he said this she sank back immediately upon her seat. "I was wretched enough. I had lost a limb and could not walk; my eyes, and must always hereafter be blind; my fitness to be among men, and must always hereafter be secluded. It is so that a man is stricken down when some terrible trouble comes upon him. But it is given to him to retrain his beams."

"You have retrained yours."

"Yes; and a strong man will show his strength by doing it quickly. Mabel, I sorrowed for myself greatly when that word was spoken, partly because I thought that your love could so easily be taken from me. And, since I have found that it has not been so, I have sorrowed for you also. But I do not blame myself, and—and I will not submit to have blame even from you." She stared him in the face as he said this. "A man should never submit to blame."

"But if he has deserved it."

"Who is to be the judge? But why should we contest this? You do not really wish to trample on me."

"No—not that."

"Nor to disgrace me; nor to make me feel myself disgraced in my own judgment?" Then there was a pause for some moments as though he had left her without another

word to say. "Shall I go now?" he asked.

"Oh, Frank!"

"I fear that my presence only makes you unhappy."

"Then what will your absence do? When shall I see you again? But, no; I will not see you again. Not for many days—not for years. Why should I? Frank, is it wicked that I should love you?" He could only shake his head in answer to this. "If it be so wicked that I must be punished for it eternally, still I love you. I can never, never, never love another. You cannot understand it. Oh, God—that I had never understood it myself! I think, I think, that I would go with you now anywhere, facing all misery, all judgments, all disgrace. You know, do you not, that if it were possible, I should not say so. But as I know that you would not stir a step with me, I do say so."

"I know it is not meant."

"It is meant, though it could not be done. Frank, I must not see her, not for awhile—not for years. I do not wish to hate her, but how can I help it? Do you remember when she flew into your arms in this room?"

"I remember it."

"Of course you do. It is your great joy now to remember that, and such like. She must be very good! Though I hate her!"

"Do not say that you hate her, Mabel."

"Though I hate her she must be good. It was a fine and a brave thing to do. I have done it; but never before the world like that; have I, Frank? Oh, Frank, I shall never do it again. Go now, and do not touch me. Let us both pray that in ten years we may meet as passionless friends." He came to her, hardly knowing what he meant, but purposing, as though by instinct, to take her hand as he parted from her. But she, putting both her hands before her face, and throwing herself on to the sofa, buried her head among the cushions.

"Is there not to be another word?" he said. Lying as she did, she still was able to make a movement of dissent, and he left her, muttering between his teeth: "Mabel, good-bye."

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

IF the story of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* ever gave employment to an earlier dramatist, no discovery of his

play has yet been made. But Shakespeare was undoubtedly acquainted with Sir John Harrington's English version of Ariosto; and, as Mr. Dyce has pointed out, the earlier portion of the serious plot of *Much Ado About Nothing* bears considerable resemblance to the story of Ariodante and Ginevra in the *Orlando Furioso*, "where Polinesso, in order to revenge himself on the Princess Ginevra, who has rejected his love suit and pledged her troth to Ariodante, prevails on her attendant, Dalinda, to personate the princess, and to appear on a balcony by moonlight, while he ascends to her apartments by a ladder of ropes." A like story was also told by Spenser, in his *Faerie Queene*, Book ii., Canto iv., published in 1590. And very important incidents of the play: such as the deception of the lover by a servant, his charge of perfidy against the heroine, his refusal to marry her, her subsequent illness and the report of her death, her funeral rites, the establishment of her innocence, and her happy union with the hero, are all to be found in Bandello's story of Timbreo di Cardona, told again in French by Belleforest in his *Histoires Tragiques*, a work with which Shakespeare was certainly familiar. In the play, as in the novel, the scene is laid at Messina, and the father's name is Leonato. The dramatist, however, has occasionally deviated from his original. Don John is influenced by malice simply in his desire to prevent the marriage of Claudio; in the story the villain is actuated by a passion for the bride. Shakespeare's recourse to Ariosto has enabled him to strengthen the device by which Claudio's jealousy is aroused: the incident of the waiting-woman personating her mistress at the window is not contained in Bandello. Further, in the play the treachery of Don John is discovered from the conversation of his accomplices having been overheard by the watch; in the novel the voluntary confession of the traitor brings about a happy ending. Dunlop writes: "In the two first deviations the dramatist, I think, has improved on his original, but in the third has altered to the worse." These searches into the sources of the play have not disclosed the originals of Beatrice and Benedick, who are, in truth, the chief characters in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and, so far as can be ascertained, Shakespeare's absolute creations. Nor has discovery been made of a prototype of Dogberry.

The first edition of the play, which was

described as having been "sundry times publicly acted by the right honourable the Lord Chamberlain his servants," was a quarto, published in 1600. The first folio edition is supposed to be printed from a copy of the quarto belonging to the library of the theatre, and corrected for the purpose of the stage. The editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare state in regard to the text that "where the folio differs from the quarto it differs almost always for the worse," the alterations being due to accident and not design. In a note upon the comedy, Stevens (referring to no authority, however) states that on May 20, 1613, Hemmings, the actor, then at the head of His Majesty's company of players, received the sum of forty pounds, with twenty pounds in addition as the king's gratuity, for exhibiting *Much Ado About Nothing* and five other plays at Hampton Court; the performances probably taking place at Christmas and Shrovetide.

To the carelessness of the old copyists and printers we owe information as to the early representatives of Dogberry, Verges, and Balthazar. In the quarto and folio editions of the comedy Dogberry's first speech in the fourth act is assigned to Keeper, a misprint for Kemp, the name of the famous comedian who first sustained the character; all the other speeches of Dogberry throughout the scene, two only excepted, being given to Kemp, and those of Verges to Cowley, a well-known actor of the time. In the folio of 1623, when Balthazar should enter to sing *Sigh no More*, in the third scene of the second act, there appears the name of Jacke Wilson, supposed to have been a singer of distinguished skill, the son of Nicholas Wilson, "minstrel of Cripplegate." In like manner, in the early quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*, appears the stage direction: "Enter Will Kemp," instead of "Enter Peter," the error being corrected in the folio of 1623. From a passage in an anonymous comedy—*The Return from Parnassus*—not printed until 1606, but clearly in existence while Elizabeth occupied the throne, it has been supposed that Kemp was the original performer of Justice Shallow in the second part of *Henry the Fourth*; but the evidence on this point is not convincing, while a suggestion that he was the first representative of the Grave-digger in *Hamlet*, of Launce, of Launcelot Gobbo, and of Touchstone, seems to be altogether without warrant. There were other actors of low comedy in the company

first producing Shakespeare's plays who were just as likely to have been employed on such occasions; nor was Kemp always a member of the troop when certain of the comedies first came upon the stage. It is certain, however, that he was a very popular comedian, and that he at once stepped into the place left vacant by the death of Richard Tarlton, who has been described as "the most famous actor of clowns' parts that our theatre, ancient or modern, ever produced," and who died in 1588. A curious tract by Thomas Nash, entitled *An Almond for a Parrot*, published about 1589, is dedicated to "that most comical and conceited cavalier Monsieur de Kempe, Jestmonger and Vice-gerent General to the Ghost of Dick Tarlton." Kemp was famous for his extemporal wit or his address in "gagging," and Hamlet's censure of the clowns who speak more than is set down for them is supposed to have been pointed at the first impersonator of Dogberry. In Richard Brome's comedy of *Antipodes*, not printed until 1640, but written some years earlier, Letoy, an old nobleman, complains to Byplay, an actor, of his increasing or reducing his part at pleasure, and holding interlocations with the audience instead of attending to the regular dialogue and business of the scene. The actor excuses himself:

This is a way, my lord, has been allowed
On elder stages, to move mirth and laughter.

Letoy replies:

"Yes, in the days of Tarlton and Kempe,
Before the stage was purged from barbarism,
And brought to the perfection it now shines with.
Then fools and jesters spent their wits because
The poets were wise enough to save
Their own for profitabler uses.

Of Richard Cowley, the first Verges, little is known, save that he is one of the players enumerated in the folio Shakespeare of 1623; he appears to have sustained small parts of a supernumerary kind, now playing a lord or attendant, and now carrying a banner.

After the reopening of the theatres Benedick and Beatrice reappeared upon the scene under rather curious conditions. Sir William Davenant produced in 1662, at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, his *Law Against Lovers*, a capricious alteration of *Measure for Measure*, with selections from *Much Ado About Nothing*. The scene is laid at Turin, and the adventures of Benedick and Beatrice are, as it were, interleaved with the story of Isabella and Angelo. But while borrowing these characters, Davenant has entrusted them much

dialogue of his own contriving: being fully convinced of his power to improve upon Shakespeare. Mr. Pepys witnessed a performance of the *Law Against Lovers* on February 18, 1662, and pronounced it "a good play and well performed." He was apparently unconscious that it owed anything to Shakespeare. He was especially charmed with the dancing and singing of a little girl whom he had never seen before, and whose presence he thought compensated for the loss of Roxalana, otherwise Elizabeth Davenport, the actress borne from the stage and so cruelly deceived by the Earl of Oxford. Davenant's tragi-comedy enjoyed some favour, but it seems not to have been revived at any time. The names of the actors taking part in the performance have not been preserved. Benedick may have been played by Betterton, and Beatrice by Mrs. Betterton, otherwise known as Mrs. Saunderson; but we are without evidence on the subject.

In 1721 *Much Ado About Nothing* was presented at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields; the playbills being headed "Not acted thirty years"—a statement made rather at random. The comedy enjoyed three performances. Quin is supposed to have personated Leonato; Ryan, Benedick; Leigh, Claudio; and Bullock, Dogberry; Mrs. Seymour appearing as Hero, and Mrs. Cross as Beatrice. Davies, in his *Miscellanies*, speaks highly of Mrs. Seymour. "She felt all the passions," he says, "and expressed them agreeable to their various powers and in conformity to the action of the drama. In person she was tall and well made, but grew large as she advanced in life; her countenance was expressive, and her voice pleasing and flexible." Ryan held her to be "superior to all the actresses he had ever seen." Davies thought the actor too partial in preferring Mrs. Seymour to Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Porter, "yet surely," he adds, "she must have had a large share of merit to encourage his judgment so strongly in her favour." Her Belvidera was much esteemed, and she was the original representative of Fenton's Mariamne, her portrait being engraved as a frontispiece to that tragedy. As a child Mrs. Cross had spoken the prologue to the third part of *Don Quixote* in 1696.

In 1737 a certain Rev. James Miller, of Wadham College, Oxford, sometime lecturer at Trinity Chapel, Conduit Street, and preacher at the private chapel at Roehampton, and afterwards rector at

Upcerne, Dorsetshire, produced at Drury Lane Theatre The Universal Passion, an adaptation of Much Ado About Nothing. In his prologue Mr. Miller confessed his obligation to Shakespeare, but omitted to mention that he stood also indebted to Molière. For The Universal Passion was compounded in almost equal proportions of Much Ado About Nothing and the comédie-ballet of La Princesse d'Elide, borrowed in its turn from the Spanish play, El Desden con el Desden of Agostino Moreto. The names of the characters were altered. In lieu of Benedick, Claudio, Leonato, Don John, Conrade, Beatrice, Hero, and Margaret, appeared Protheus, Bellario, Gratiano, Byron, Gremio, Liberia, Lucilia, and Delia. The scene was laid at Genoa. To strengthen the dialogue lines from Twelfth Night and The Two Gentlemen of Verona were occasionally borrowed. Geneste writes: "It cannot be supposed that a play compiled from Shakespeare and Molière should be a bad one;" but surely such a result is conceivable, and The Universal Passion is almost a case in point. He proceeds: "Miller has, however, altered Much Ado About Nothing in a manner disgraceful to himself and highly injurious to Shakespeare." The Universal Passion was played nine times; it then departed from the stage for ever. Quin appeared as Protheus, Mills as Bellario, Mrs. Clive as Liberia. The part of Juculo, a court-jester, was entrusted to Theophilus Cibber. The Reverend Mr. Miller was the author or adapter of some twelve plays in all. He incurred the displeasure of his audience on account of a little comedy called The Coffee-House, in which it was alleged he had introduced, to their detriment, living persons—Mrs. Yarrow and her daughter, who kept Dick's Coffee-House in Fleet Street between the Temple gates. A strong body of Templars, patrons of Dick's, attended Drury Lane, and hooted Mr. Miller's comedy from the stage. It was in vain he protested in a preface to his play that he had intended no offence; that the work was in truth borrowed from the French; that the characters supposed to represent Mrs. Yarrow and her daughter were to be found in the original, and that their speeches were direct translations "as near as things of that nature will admit:" an artist engaged to supply the publication with a frontispiece had unfortunately produced a sketch of the very coffee-house in question. This rendered hopeless his reconciliation with "the Inns of Court wits,"

who, not content with condemning The Coffee-House, resolved upon the suppression of any further essays Mr. Miller might make as a dramatist. He was compelled to confine himself thenceforward to his profession as a clergyman, venturing, however, a little while before his death, upon an adaptation of the Mahomet of Voltaire.

Much Ado About Nothing reappeared in its original form at Covent Garden in 1739, when Chapman played Benedick and Hippisley Dogberry; Mrs. Vincent and Mrs. Bellamy undertaking the characters of Beatrice and Hero. In 1746 the comedy was revived for the benefit of Mrs. Pritchard, who impersonated Beatrice to the Benedick of Ryan. We next come to Garrick's first appearance as Benedick on November 14, 1748. This was at Drury Lane; the playbill announcing the comedy was headed, "Never acted here." Much Ado About Nothing was played eight nights in succession, a rare occurrence in those days. Davies writes: "The excellent acting of Mrs. Pritchard in Beatrice was not inferior to that of Garrick in Benedick; every scene between them was a continued struggle for superiority, nor could the spectators determine to which of them the preference was due." The Dramatic Censor of 1770 speaks tepidly of the play as of no great importance in the study, although pleasing in representation, and casting no damp upon the fame of its author; Garrick's Benedick, however, is described as affording uncommon satisfaction, and stress is laid upon the pre-eminence of his significant features, the distinct volubility of his expression, his vivacity, and the stage manœuvres of his scenes of repartee with Beatrice. Mr. King's Benedick is also admired: "If we had never feasted upon Mr. Garrick's superior merit, it is highly probable we should never have wished for anything better." Of Mrs. Pritchard it is said that she was so excellent as Beatrice, "and struck out such unison merit with Mr. Garrick, that her uncharacteristic corpulence was always overlooked." The critic concludes: "We don't think ourselves unjustified in allowing Miss Pope some share of approbation."

At Covent Garden, in 1774, Much Ado About Nothing was revived—"Not acted these twenty years," the playbill stated—in order that Mrs. Barry might play Beatrice for the first time with Lee for her Benedick, Lewis as Claudio, and Shuter as Dogberry. In the following year the comedy was presented at Drury Lane,

Garrick resuming his old part to a new and most successful Beatrice, Mrs. Abington. Mr. Boaden held her to be "peculiarly qualified" for this character. "In passing over the long series of her performances," he writes, "this always seems to press itself forward in my memory as a perfect thing."

Garrick was followed in the part of Benedick by Henderson, for whom the comedy was reproduced at Drury Lane in 1778. The new actor succeeded completely, in spite of serious physical disqualifications. He was of low stature and graceless form; his eyes lacked fire, and his voice was somewhat weak and unmusical; his face was without expression or flexibility. Moreover, he always dressed badly, and could neither dance nor fence; yet, as his biographer relates, "the strength of his judgment and the fervency of his mind broke through the mounds which nature seemed to have placed between him and excellence; his comprehension was ample, his knowledge diversified, and his elocution accurate." His Benedick was regarded as a masterly effort of art, "the finest comic acting in my time," writes Boaden. "A thousand little traits of whim and pleasantry sparkled from his luxuriant fancy." One night, it seems, perfect as he was in Benedick, his memory betrayed him: he broke down in one of his speeches and made a sudden stop. The prompter, knowing his actor, had supposed it impossible that the words of Benedick could escape from Henderson's memory, and had therefore quitted his seat at the wing. Henderson began again, and stopped precisely at the same word; the absent prompter of course knew nothing of his dilemma. The actor, we are told, "became vexed, and loudly called out, 'Give me the word!'" Upon this the audience awarded him the usual signs of their favour, and he rose from the seat on which he reclined and bowed. By this time the prompter, Wild, was returned to his place, the required words were given, and Benedick proceeded as usual.

George the Third demonstrated his cordial admiration of Henderson's Benedick, even sending the actor a message by Sir Charles Thompson directly from the royal box expressive of applause, and intimating that if "the king were a manager, Mr. Henderson should perform upon the same stage with Mrs. Siddons." The royal desire, however, to combine the efforts of these distinguished artists could not be gratified. Henderson's Beatrice was

now Miss Pope, now Miss Younge, and now Mrs. Abington. In 1787, at the Haymarket, King played Benedick, and, for the first time, Miss Farren appeared as Beatrice. In the following year, at Drury Lane, the lady was supported by the Benedick of John Kemble, Parsons playing Dogberry. Horace Walpole wrote to Miss Berry of this representation of the comedy: "I agree with you in not thinking Beatrice one of Miss Farren's capital parts. Mrs. Pritchard played it with more spirit, and was superior to Garrick's Benedick; so is Kemble, too, as he is to Quin in *Maskwell*." In 1793 Lewis had succeeded to the part of Benedick, with Quick as Dogberry and Fawcett as Verges. Lewis was again Benedick at Covent Garden in 1797, when the evergreen Mrs. Abington was again Beatrice. The lady scarcely charmed as of yore, however. Her old admirer, Boaden, writes of her performance that "in point of skill it was equal to the efforts of her best time; but she had enlarged her figure, and her face too, by time, and could perhaps fascinate no one without the aid of recollection on his part. She was no longer the glass of fashion that she had once been; the modern costume à la Grecque did not suit her; she was now a matronly Beatrice; but while alive the character clung to her closely, and in the year 1815 sunk into the grave with her." The year 1803 still found Lewis playing Benedick, his Beatrice being now Miss Louisa Brunton, afterwards Countess of Craven, her third appearance in London; the Claudio Charles Kemble, the Dogberry Munden, and the Hero Mrs. Henry Siddons. In 1804, at Drury Lane, Elliston was Benedick to the Beatrice of Mrs. Jordan, with Suett for Dogberry. In 1817, at Covent Garden, Charles Kemble undertook the part of Benedick; his Beatrice was at this time Miss Brunton, afterwards Mrs. Yates, niece of the Miss Louisa Brunton of 1803; but in 1830 his Beatrice was Miss Foote, and in the following year his own daughter, Fanny Kemble.

Charles Kemble's Benedick greatly delighted his audience; and to the close of his career in 1839 was counted among his best impersonations. Leigh Hunt, writing in 1807, had described Charles Kemble as "upon the whole a very gentlemanly and useful actor, with much of graceful mediocrity and with an occasional display of great genius." With the Benedick of 1831 the critic could find no fault, but dwelt fondly on the merits of the perform-

ance. "His utterance of the grand final reason for marrying—'The world must be peopled'—with his hands linked behind him, a general elevation of his aspect, and a sort of look at the whole universe before him as if he saw all the future generations that might depend on his verdict, was a bit of the right masterly gusto—the true perception and relish of the thing, any discrepancy from which would have been a false reading." Miss Kemble's Beatrice Leigh Hunt pronounced to be very clever—one of the very best of her characters, but satisfactory rather in parts than as a whole. "It wants, we think, the flowing and perpetual giddy grace of Beatrice, who is like a girl at the top of her school, and whose movements ought to run on like her tongue. Mrs. Jordan gave more of this than Miss Kemble—a great deal more; and her laugh and heartiness were always inimitable; but she wanted the air of good breeding. . . . Miss Kemble's sarcasm, as usual, was good, and she received great and deserved applause in the speech where she half good-humouredly, half peevishly, says and unsays her confession of love to Benedick, ending it abruptly with the tearful words, 'I'm sorry for my cousin.' This ebullition of the chief thought which she has at her heart at the moment was excellently, admirably given, and made a great sensation." Finally he pronounced that "with a few less peacock-like movements of the head and gait, and a little more abandonment of herself to Beatrice's animal spirits, the character in her hands would come very nearly in merit to that of her father's Benedick." Father and daughter continued to appear as Benedick and Beatrice for some years.

Macready was scarcely twenty-one when he first attempted the part of Benedick, but, as a manager's son, he had no difficulty in securing characters of importance. Concerning the merits of his effort he is silent, but it obtained for him several valued friends, among them the family of Francis Twiss, "who had married the loveliest of Mrs. Siddons's sisters." Macready notes: "Horace Twiss called on me at his mother's desire, and it was to that performance of Benedick I was indebted for an intimacy with friends whose attachment to me lasted through their lives, and whose memory I hold in ever grateful regard." As he advanced in his profession the actor eschewed comedy more and more; he remained faithful, however, to the part of Benedick, assuming it occa-

sionally both in his London and provincial engagements down to the close of his theatrical career. During his farewell engagement at the Haymarket, in 1851, Benedick and Mr. Oakley—in *The Jealous Wife*—were the only characters in comedy he cared to undertake; he was wont, indeed, to insert a clause in his agreements with managers to the effect that he should not be required to play Joseph Surface; yet as Joseph Surface he had at one time won extraordinary applause. During his management of Drury Lane Theatre he produced *Much Ado About Nothing* with great completeness. Under date February 24, 1843, he records in his journal that he "acted Benedick very well," that "the audience went with the play," and that he was called before the curtain. He found an admirable Beatrice in Mrs. Nisbett; Miss Fortescue appearing as Hero, Compton as Dogberry, and Keeley as Verges; other characters being sustained by Messrs. Phelps, Anderson, Hudson, G. Bennett, Selby, and Ryder, with Allen, the admired tenor of those times, to sing Balthazar's song. Macready was said to display great humour, if of a dry and caustic sort, in his performance of Benedick. But a sense of strong contrast always arises from the comic efforts of a performer whose usual occupation has been tragic. A critic writes of Macready's Benedick: "That he is a sort of matrimonial theorist—ludicrous from the gravity with which he supports a favourite hypothesis, and not a crotchety individual with a curious temper needing amelioration."

Although *Much Ado About Nothing* is not to be counted among the pageant plays or the illuminated revivals of Mr. Charles Kean's management, he yet produced the comedy at the Princess's Theatre in 1858, with a liberal and tasteful provision of stage decorations and costumes. The first scene represented the Port of Messina at sunset. As the day declined lights appeared in the harbour and in the windows of the adjoining houses, and the rising moon poured her silver rays upon the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean. Then followed a masquerade scene, rich in variegated lamps, decking gardens, bridge, and lake, viewed through the open arches of the palace. Mr. Kean was a spirited and humorous Benedick, endowing the comic passages of the part with singular force; while the Beatrice of Mrs. Kean won general admiration. Dogberry and Verges found most efficient performers in

the veterans, Frank Matthews and Drinkwater Meadows.

The Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 having emancipated the stage, *Much Ado About Nothing* became a stock piece at the general services of the managers. The comedy, however, while enjoying occasional performances here and there, has rarely been permitted any lengthened run. During many years Beatrice was one of the parts in which Miss Helen Faucit was accustomed to "star." At the Princess's Theatre, before the rule of Mr. Kean, *Much Ado About Nothing* was played at intervals, now with Mr. James Wallack and Mrs. Stirling, and now with the American players—Mr. Davenport and Mrs. Mowatt—as its hero and heroine. At Sadler's Wells, under Mr. Phelps's management, the comedy was sometimes played, with Mr. Marston as Benedick and Miss Cooper as Beatrice. At the Adelphi, in 1867, Beatrice was one of the Shakespearian parts essayed by Miss Kate Terry on the eve of her retirement from the stage. At the Haymarket, Beatrice has found representation at the hands of Miss Amy Sedgwick and of Mrs. Sinclair, the divorced wife of Edwin Forrest, the American tragedian; the Benedick being usually the meritorious Mr. Howe. Later Beatrices have been Miss Neilson and Miss Ada Cavendish. In 1872, at the Holborn Theatre, since called the Mirror and the Duke's, and early in the present month destroyed by fire, Mr. Creswick ventured upon the curious experiment of "doubling" the parts of Benedick and Dogberry. The actor obtained some applause by this feat of his histrionic eccentricity, but the comedy gained nothing. It was newly divided into three acts, and certain of the scenes were transposed, to afford the actor opportunities of changing his dress and freshly painting his face. In the result the characters seemed unfortunately blurred and blended: Benedick was unduly flavoured with Dogberry, while Dogberry invited recollections of Benedick. Happily Mr. Creswick's proceeding has hitherto attracted no imitators.

JANE HEARN'S TRIAL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"ONE may mistake a fancy for a passion; but never a passion for a fancy, when once it comes." Thus says one of our best and purest writers; and truly the story of

many a woman's life—the tragic history of many a human heart, lies folded in the truth he tells. It is the mistakes of life, more than its crimes, which have the most pitiful consequences.

Jane Hearn, when she was a girl of eighteen, made a mistake in life. She took a fancy for a passion, followed its leading, and found it but an *ignis fatuus* which led her into places where there was no solid ground beneath her feet, no rift in the clouds overhead by which some ray of light might shine to guide her on her way.

She had dreamed dreams and seen visions of what her married life should be as the wife of Walter Disney Hearn. She had thought to herself: "After my marriage-day I shall never be alone—all the troubles of life will be easier to bear because my husband is by my side to bear them with me; all the joys of life sweeter, because he is there to share them." This was the rosy light that fancy shed upon the future that was coming.

How cold—how barren—was the reality that followed these passion-laden dreams! A woman may love a man through much wrong, through disgrace and shame, through poverty and suffering; but there is one thing which slays love as surely as loss of air and sunlight kills a plant, and that is—indifference.

Jane found herself face to face with absolute and chilling indifference before she had been a wife a year. Walter Hearn was a man who craved for the unattainable with ardent longing: his fancy dressed itself in the garb of passion, and the counterfeit was excellent—for a while. He was a man whose moods varied like the wind: kind, if the humour was on him and he had an end to gain; cruel, if it pleased him to revenge a whim denied; charming to those he cared to charm and only showing his real selfish self to those of his own household.

No one had ever called Jane, his wife, beautiful; but she had a certain power of fascination about her, and he had felt it—for a while. That was one reason why he married her; forgetting that one can scarcely espouse a woman—only for a while.

Jane was a slight slip of a girl, graceful in every movement; she had soft dark eyes, a wealth of dusky locks, and a high-bred look that promised well for her powers of endurance. She left no stone unturned to try and keep the love she had

once believed her own in very truth. But if a tree does not bear any fruit, you cannot gather what does not exist wherewith to slake your thirst. Walter Hearn could not comprehend the nature of love in its best and highest sense; sympathy of thought and feeling, the companionship of mind with mind, the fealty of heart to heart, were things he no more understood than he did the geological formation of the earth's crust. When Jane craved for bread, he gave her a stone. When she longed to be near him and with him in his amusements, when she tried to cultivate a taste for society naturally distasteful to her, he said, "Do as you please." He made her feel that her presence was a thing indifferent to him at all times—irksome to him at many. She was of too noble a nature to harbour jealousy, but it hurt the dignity of her womanhood to see him courteous, admiring, full of every charm and grace of manner to other women—when for her, his wife, he had no loving word, no tender thought, all through the weary days.

Jane was well-dowered, and gloried in the fact for the sake of the man she loved. She would not willingly have had any barrier set against his entire appropriation of her fortune; but her guardian, Colonel Daubeney, a man who had been her father's companion in arms, insisted with a gentle persistence on part of it being settled on herself and any children she might have. More he could not get her to do in the way of self-protection—even this much Jane looked upon as a hardship; a view of matters in which, in his secret heart, Walter Desney Hearn most fully agreed. In fact, speaking in confidence to a friend, he called the colonel a "meddling old fool."

It was a good thing in the long run for Jane that she had had a "fool" of any kind to look after her interests, at all events to some extent; for when, five years after the date of her marriage, Walter Hearn (in consequence of some club transaction that would not exactly bear the broad light of day) went to America with a friend, and that friend wrote to break the fact of his sudden death from sun-fever to those he had left at home, Jane, his widow, was found to have no earthly possessions remaining to her save that small portion of her fortune that Colonel Daubeney had tied up safely, so sorely against her will.

To say that she did not mourn her husband would not be true. Any good

woman will mourn a man who has stood to her in the closest and most sacred relation in life, no matter how that life may have been saddened and blighted by his influence. Indeed, when she went to live with Colonel Daubeney and his gentle wife in their home on the western Scottish coast, Jane would indeed hardly have admitted to herself the new sweet sense of rest and peace and security that stole over her life like sunshine creeping over a landscape and making everything fair.

Her newborn content rather took the form of an exquisite delight in the beautiful Nature by which she found herself surrounded, than in any more definite way. The lovely shadows of the clouds upon the sea; the grey-green world of sky and water, cloven here and there by the gleam of a sea-bird's wing or the glint of a red-brown sail; the song of a lark as he rose higher and higher in the blue vault of heaven, uplifted heavenwards by the triumphant melody of his own song; the tender golden-green of the trees in spring; the perfume of the roses in summer; the wash of the sea against the rocky shore—all these beauties of sight and sound had for Jane a new significance. She did not know that it was the cessation of daily effort, the relief from the strain of self-watchfulness that made her so open to every happy impulse of appreciation; but the loving eyes that watched her read the truth full clearly, and thanked Heaven in that, after long strife and struggle, the gentle heart was at rest.

Colonel and Mrs. Daubeney were a childless pair, and Jane filled the vacant corner in their hearts. No daughter could have been dearer. They vied with each other who should show her the most thoughtful care, the tenderest sympathy.

That was a happy home—the home where this trio lived beside the ever-changing sea. In time the widow's cap rested no more on Jane's soft, rippling hair; the very memory of the bitter past seemed to have faded from her mind as an image passes from the mirror that has once reflected it; she had found peace, and, having known the pain of its lack, treasured it as a jewel of great price.

She grew to look so like the light-hearted girl of olden days that it was hard for those who looked upon her to realise the fact of her six-and-twenty years.

Before another year was added to their sum, the peace, so lately found, so dearly prized, was troubled; but, like Bethesda's

pool, troubled by an angel—the angel of a love, full, complete, intense.

Jane had once “mistaken a fancy for a passion;” no fear she should now “mistake a passion for a fancy.” In the unripeness and inexperience of her youth she had succumbed to the charm of a man’s voice and manner; now, in the full bloom of her womanhood, she yielded to the influence of a man’s heart and mind; she revelled in the sweet subjection claimed by one higher in thought, deeper in character than herself.

In past days she had found a pleasure in Walter Hearn’s adulation and fondness; now she only sought how best she might show her own devotion to one she knew to be worthy of all she could give.

Jane’s new love-story came about thus:

A certain expedition was about to set forth on a quest of scientific enquiry; there was some talk, even in that quiet corner of Scotland beyond the Kyles of Bute, of a young naval officer whose talents bid fair to make him a shining light in the annals of science. He was to go with the expedition, and his name was Guy Challoner.

Some delay occurring in the fitting up of the ship selected to sail to almost unknown seas, Guy Challoner came to spend a week or two with some old friends of his who lived near Colonel Daubeney.

Guy came north in utter unconsciousness that at each step of the journey he was nearing his fate, and that that fate was to come in the form of Jane Hearn.

When first he saw her she stood beneath the shadow of a lilac-tree whose faint purple blossoms swayed to the wind. She wore a simple dress of pale grey, and at her throat was a crimson knot. From that moment life was a new thing to Guy Challoner. If he had been ambitious before, he was doubly so now, for day by day he grew to read better and more clearly the noble nature of this woman who might inspire a man to strive for a greater name, but would never hold him back from fame because she cared to grasp as much of his life as she could. Her cultured mind, chastened by past sorrows, appreciative of all that was grand in science and beautiful in Nature, eagerly followed the lead of his. The man lived a charmed life, feeling himself beloved even before he put his own love into words; and, when he did speak, when one evening as the thrushes sang good-bye to the day that was dying, as the shadows lay sleeping on the sea, Guy Challoner told Jane how she had crept into his heart and nestled there.

“Do you love me enough?” he said, looking into her eyes, at once dark and bright.

“Don’t you know?” she answered, hiding their happy light upon his breast.

The thrushes were silent, the shadows on the water fled at the soft touch of the moonrise—and still those two lingered in the gloaming, hand in hand, like two happy children.

“We must go in now,” said Guy, holding her a moment close against his heart. Then he said, fondly, as a lover should, yet with a certain grave solemnity in his voice: “Jane, you will never change to me, dear, will you? It will be the same as now to the end, be what that may, will it not, my love?”

And for all answer she laid her arms about his neck, and said in the words of our sweetest singer:

“I will love thee to the death,
And out beyond, into the dream to come.”

It seemed to Jane after that night of betrothal, as if for her a new heaven and a new earth were created. Not only was she loved with a passion and tenderness such as she had never realised in the past, but she was led on from day to day to some new knowledge, some more perfect understanding of the beauties of Nature. She was allowed to feel herself not only loved as a woman, but prized as a companion; she was unspeakably, intensely happy, for once in her life.

So the golden days passed on, and at last it was settled that Jane’s marriage-day should be before that expedition sailed to unknown seas, and Guy should leave her, not his promised bride, but his wife.

“Then I can come after you,” she said, with her eyes suspiciously bright, and a quiver about her lips. “You can write for me from any port where you are likely to stay any time.”

“Can I?” he said, kissing the tremble from her mouth.

Before the wedding-day came round Guy had to go down south to pay a visit to the Admiralty, and make certain arrangements about that intended voyage of which we wot.

We will peep over his shoulder, if you please, and read the foolish letter that Jane sent him on the second day of that short separation—a letter than which, in Guy’s eyes, earth could not hold a dearer thing, save and except the little hand that wrote it:

“I am not being idle because I miss you

so much. I love reading the books that you have read before me, and where, on the margins, you have left pencilled notes. It is like following in footsteps that you have trodden in—it is as if you had passed that way before me, and dropped a flower here and there for me to pick up. I have been so happy, Guy, this last few weeks! I have been so happy that my happiness has frightened me sometimes—it is only a short time, and yet it seems more than all the years of my life before. It is foolish, I suppose, to write you such long letters, and you away for so short a time, and coming back so soon? It is unworthy of the wisdom that should have gathered round my seven-and-twenty years—is it not? When you get this there will only be two days more before you set out north again, so that very soon I shall be beginning the day that has only to wear to seven o'clock before it brings you to me. The lilies of the valley are all out in the garden, and I shall fill the vase upon your writing-table with the pretty bells early that morning. Then I shall go for a long walk along the shore. You will think me a baby for writing like this. Do you know I really thought I was growing quite a sensible, almost strong-minded woman—a matter-of-fact, common-sense sort of person—once. Before I met you, I mean—before the day when under the lilac I sat with the leaf-shadows flickering on my book, and Mrs. Bayard touched me on the shoulder to make me look up. You know what I saw when I did look up, Guy? Oh, my darling, how fair the world has seemed to me—how beautiful a thing life has grown since the moment when I met your dear eyes looking into mine with a strange calm questioning, as though they had found something they had been looking for ever so long! You see they had found me—and they were very glad. No; you are not good-looking, Guy; no one could call you that, sir! You are a plain man, clever, as one can see at a glance, and—yes—a little—just a little—hard and stern. You are not very young either, you know—what is it? Thirty-three and a bit. Now you will say there is a spice of impertinence in my nature, and this must be it coming out. But, Guy, no one knows but Jane how gentle and tender you can be—no one else has any need to know—have they? That is a thing between your heart and mine. What was it I said to you that night—the night you asked me if I loved you ‘enough’ to

be your wife—the night when the thrushes were singing, and the moon rose like a silver world over the sea? ‘I will love thee to the death, and out beyond into the dream to come.’”

By what he thought in truth a happy chance, Guy Challoner was able to set off on his journey north a day earlier than he had expected. What a fond light of surprise and joy would dawn in Jane's dark eyes, as he stole upon her unawares in some quiet spot such as she loved to hide in, alone with her treasure of sweet thoughts! Perhaps she would be under the old lilac-tree? She loved that tree he knew, though now all its blossoms had fallen.

It was a fair summer's day, the day on which Guy reached that fair home beside the sea where dwelt his love. Green below, blue overhead, and between, the wafting of innumerable wings, the song of a thousand birds. That was what the world looked like to Guy's happy eyes as he neared the haven of his desires.

How quiet the place seemed!

No one was astir. He looked in vain for the substantial forms of the colonel and his wife, usually to be seen wandering in the garden at that hour on a fine evening, or for a slight figure, book in hand—a woman with earnest quiet eyes and a crown of dusky hair.

He passed quickly through the hall-door, which in summer stood wide open from early morn, opened the door of the room on the left—the favourite indoor haunt of Mrs. Daubeney and Jane, and then he stood quite still—struck dumb as it were by what he saw within.

By the mantel-shelf stood the old colonel, a letter in his hand, a look of pain and terror on his face—the face that was drawn and white like that of one who has just undergone a painful ordeal and is still dazed by the shock. Near him was his wife Susan, looking as helpless as women of her loving nature and small endurance always do when things are going very badly indeed. Her eyes were streaming with tears as she sat in a limp heap in one corner of the sofa, and, as she saw Guy, she gave a little piteous cry. As for the colonel, he threw out his hands towards the figure at the open door as though he would fain have kept off any nearer approach.

“Great Heaven!” he said hoarsely, letting the letter in his hand flutter to the ground; “is that you, Guy? Has any one told you?”

"Told me what?" said Guy, white to the lips, but master of himself as usual. "Where is Jane?"

"She is gone up the shore—she knows nothing—come in, shut the door. You are a brave man, Guy. Call your courage to your aid. You will need it all! Read this."

Guy drew a deep breath as he took the closely-written sheet of foreign paper from the colonel's hand, and carried it over to the window.

As he did so Mrs. Daubeney covered her face with her hands, and began rocking herself to and fro in a perfect frenzy of grief.

Guy had been full of a terrible fear lest some harm had come to Jane, but, thank God for that, his dear love was safe and well! Any calamity, he thought, that did not touch the dear head so soon to be pillowed on his breast could be met and borne. And with such thoughts beating right hotly in his heart, Guy began to read the letter on the foreign paper.

COUSIN JACQUES.

A YEAR or two ago, while looking over the contents of one of the innumerable wooden boxes stocked with literary provender of every kind on the parapet of the Quai Malaquais, we came upon a thin duodecimo volume in very dilapidated calf binding, the title of which, *Les Lunes du Cousin Jacques*, at once arrested our attention. We remembered having heard its author spoken of in terms of high praise by an octogenarian bibliomaniac, and feeling curious to ascertain how far his judgment coincided with our own, we invested a few sous in the purchase of the little bouquin and carried it home. On examination we found it to contain only a fragment of the entire work, consisting of three numbers of the *Lunes*, and dated 1786; the perusal, however, of the specimen in our possession so pleased us by their peculiar drollery that we could not rest until, by a diligent study of every available source of information, we had become tolerably well acquainted with the personal history of the writer, one of the quaintest and most unquestionably original humorists of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Louis Abel Beffroy de Reigny was born at Laon, November 6, 1757; he was the youngest of three brothers, named respectively after manors forming part of the

paternal estate, Beffroy de Beauvoir and Beffroy de Jisompres, and received in his turn the supplementary appellation of De Reigny from his father, head of the junior branch of an ancient provincial family. His entrance into the world was within an ace of being followed speedily by his exit from it, for, when only a few weeks old, having been entrusted to a careless nurse he fell into the fire, and bore the trace of this disaster, in the shape of a deep and disfiguring scar, during the remainder of his life. "But," as one of his biographers philosophically puts it, "Cousin Jacques"—how he came by this nickname we shall see hereafter—"was probably rather proud of it than otherwise, on the principle that the next thing to being a man of mark is to be a marked man."

While still very young, he was sent to Paris for the completion of his education, and placed at the college of Louis le Grand; among his fellow-pupils there being Camille Desmoulins and Maximilien Robespierre. "I do not believe," says our author à propos of the latter, "that there are many Frenchmen who have had so good an opportunity of studying the character of Robespierre as myself; we were in the same class, and generally rivals for the same prizes. Chance willed it that on one occasion I was the successful candidate, and he never forgave me for it." During our hero's stay at college his father died, and his mother retired into a convent; he continued, however, to pass his vacations at Laon until he had attained the age of eighteen years, when, having no other profession open to him, and his share of the family inheritance not sufficing for his wants, he adopted the half ecclesiastical, half secular costume of an abbé, and soon, by his proficiency in the fashionable accomplishments of singing, guitar-playing, and verse-making, became as great a favourite with the ladies of the Marais as the traditional Vert-vert. An ingeniously turned couplet, the subject of which was a young damsel—his opposite neighbour—sitting at her window, was extensively circulated among his female admirers; and had he, like his prototype the parrot, been able to exist on sugared almonds and similar confectionery dainties, he would doubtless have played the part of "abbé galant" to the end of the chapter. "Man wants but little here below," says the poet; but when that little fails, Duke Humphrey's hospitality is apt to appear monotonous. Beffroy de Reigny found it so, at all

events. Certain promises of advancement on which he had confidently relied were never fulfilled; the candidates for every vacant benefice were legion, and wholly dependent for success on the influence of their patrons, not one of whom deigned to exert himself in behalf of our abbé. For some time he contrived to earn a precarious subsistence by giving lessons in rhetoric—to Robespierre the younger among others—but his natural vivacity soon rebelled against the dull uniformity of a professor's life, and a few months later, abandoning at once his scholastic duties and all hopes of Church preferment, he resumed his original attire, resolved to devote himself henceforth to literature, and, as a preliminary step, started, as was the custom of young authors in those days, on a pilgrimage to Ferney.

His reception by Voltaire was courteous enough; the patriarch, according to his wont, listened complacently to some verses recited in a trembling voice by the aspiring poet, and with a patronising smile encouraged him to pursue his vocation, and by all means to give the public a speedy opportunity of appreciating "so pretty a trifle." Enchanted with the result of his interview, and determined to profit by the suggestions of his mentor, Beffroy de Reigny returned to Paris, and, during an excursion in the neighbourhood with some ladies of his acquaintance, informed them of his project, painting in glowing colours the brilliant future that, as he fondly imagined, infallibly awaited him.

"Under what name do you intend publishing?" asked one of his fair companions.

The ex-abbé stared, as if not understanding the question. "Under my own, of course," he replied.

"That will never do," she retorted. "You must have a nom de guerre—something quaint and original; nothing else goes down with the public nowadays. Look at 'L'Anonyme de Vaugirard' and 'Frère Sylvain des Ardennes'; their books only sell on account of the name. Tenez," she exclaimed, clapping her hands with delight, "I have it. Do you see that individual yonder coming this way?"

"The strange-looking object in a parti-coloured coat like Joseph?" said Beffroy.

"Exactly. That is Cousin Jacques, so-called because he is more or less related to everybody in the village. He is a genuine oddity, and always walks about in a coat of seven different colours. With a name like that on your title-page, you would be famous in a month. What say you?"

"Va pour le Cousin Jacques," courteously assented M. de Reigny, and the matter was settled.

Notwithstanding his fair sponsor's prediction, the first essays of our author excited but little notice, and that not of a very flattering character. It is, however, only fair to say that their cool reception was fully merited; more extravagant productions than his three poems, Marlborough, Turlututu, and Hurluberlu, having rarely if ever issued from mortal brain. His next attempt, *Les Petites-Maisons du Parnasse*, exceeded its predecessors, if possible, in unintelligible absurdity; and, after having been proposed in turn to every publisher in the capital, and rejected by all, was ultimately brought out at the writer's expense, and fell stillborn from the press. Meanwhile, its eccentric author had still further crippled his slender resources by marrying a young girl without a sou, thereby entailing on himself the necessity of providing her with a suitable home. How they contrived to exist during the two or three years following their union is not recorded; but as the sole literary occupation of Cousin Jacques at that period of his career appears to have consisted in contributing occasional scraps of poetry (inserted, but not paid for) to the *Mercur de France*, Madame de Reigny's position, as the manager of their little household, must have been anything but a sinecure.

With 1785 came a turn of good luck, not the less welcome because totally unexpected. Among the many projects of the hitherto unsuccessful votary of the muse, a favourite one had been the foundation of a journal in prose and verse, treating of every conceivable subject, and entirely written by himself. This idea was at length carried out by the publication of the opening number of *Les Lunes du Cousin Jacques*, an olla podrida of mingled sense and nonsense, smartly turned epigrams and madrigals, and preposterous witticisms, strung together without the slightest attempt at connection, and alternately reminding one of the *Tintamarre* of Commerson, and of the *Guêpes* of Alphonse Karr. The announcement of this in every sense extraordinary novelty created a considerable sensation, and the first edition was exhausted in twenty-four hours. Paris and the provinces were alike tickled by the familiar and amusing style of the writer. By way of conciliating his patrons, Cousin Jacques took especial care to inform them that they had

the option of paying either in money or in kind; a pair of velvet breeches or a coat being considered equivalent to a year's subscription. Presents came to him from all parts of France: one admirer forwarding him a case of champagne, another a white puppy with black paws, and a third—whose liberality he could probably have dispensed with—a copy of verses. Originally published monthly, and afterwards fortnightly, the *Lunes* continued to appear with occasional interruptions until 1790; during this interval the title underwent more than one change, being successively transformed into *Le Courrier des Planètes*, and *Cousin Jacques*.

A peculiar feature of this singular specimen of periodical literature is the perfect harmony existing between the author and his subscribers; he is entirely at home with them, and they with him. He chats with them, addresses them by name, and gravely confers with them respecting the various articles intended for publication. He even goes so far as to represent a deputation of them introduced into his editorial room, and "interviewing" himself and his coadjutress the Moon with reference to the future prospects of the journal. Take the following sample:

CHORUS OF SUBSCRIBERS.

Serez-vous toujours joyeux,
Moraux et point ennuyeux?
Nous ferez-vous toujours rire
Sans prodiguer le satire?

THE MOON AND COUSIN JACQUES.

Oui, nous le jurons!

[The subscribers executing a pirouette.

Nous nous abonnerons!

CHORUS CONTINUED.

Mettez-vous de temps en temps
Quelques sujets importants?
Mettez-vous en vers, en prose,
Des tableaux couleur de rose?

THE MOON AND COUSIN JACQUES.

Oui, nous en mettrons.

[The subscribers dancing the grande ronde.

Nous nous abonnerons!

In another number we find the subjoined picturesque announcement: "Our publisher, M. Leschapard, at present residing on the Pont Notre Dame, is on the point of changing his abode for thirty-three very excellent reasons. In the first place, the house which he now occupies is about to be pulled down, as are also the other houses on the bridges; which reason renders it unnecessary to dwell on the remaining thirty-two. In future his establishment will be in the Rue du Roule, opposite the royal court perfumer. The removal of the *Lunes* will take place with great pomp by moonlight, about seven

o'clock in the evening, and the order of the procession will be as follows: First, a street porter, and after him a wheelbarrow, with another porter behind to push it along. The route will be by the Rue de Gèvres, the Quai de la Mégisserie, the Samaritaine, the Rue de la Monnaie, and from thence to the Rue du Roule. Illuminations are optional."

Encouraged by the success of his literary bantling, Cousin Jacques bethought himself of utilising a talent he had hitherto neglected, but which now appeared to him likely to increase his popularity. Naturally an excellent musician, he had composed in his leisure moments a variety of agreeable melodies, which, by the advice of Grétry, he adapted to a scenario of his own invention, and profiting by the easy access to the theatre afforded to journalists, presented his manuscript to the actors of the *Comédie Italienne*, by whom it was accepted and performed, May 23, 1786, under the attractive title of *The Wings of Love*. Partly owing to its own merits, and partly to the clever acting and singing of Trial, Mdles. Carline and Desbrosses, this maiden essay met with a most flattering reception, and at the conclusion of the piece the author was unanimously called for. As he did not appear, and the audience were becoming impatient, Trial came forward, and in an impromptu couplet suggested that, "apprehensive of failure, he had probably sought refuge in the moon." This sally brought down roars of laughter; but the public would take no refusal, and Cousin Jacques was finally compelled to make his bow, "which," as Mdle. Carline remarked, "was infinitely less graceful than his music." The success of *The Wings of Love* procured for its author the honorary title of "complimentary poet" attached to the *Comédie Italienne*, in virtue of which privilege he enjoyed for several years the monopoly of composing the short introductory pieces represented at the inauguration of each theatrical season.

Up to 1789 nothing occurred to disturb his regular mode of life; the sale of the *Lunes* was steadily increasing, and, absorbed by his literary occupations and by his anxiety to render the journal still more palatable to his subscribers, he had little opportunity of mixing himself up with the political discussions of the time. In that year, however, he was unexpectedly called upon to play his part in the great revolutionary drama. Soon after the taking of the Bastille a party of patriots, Palloy at

their head, invaded his printing-office, and summoned him as the most popular man of letters residing in the quarter to accompany them to the Hôtel de Ville, and there record in appropriate language, for the special edification of their fellow-citizens, the history of that memorable event. In vain Cousin Jacques objected that he was no historian, but a song-writer and journalist. They insisted on his compliance with their demand, and finding him disposed to argue the point, at once settled the question by laying hold of his collar, and carrying him off. Thus escorted, he arrived at the Hôtel de Ville, where a multitude of citizens and Gardes Françaises awaited him; and, deeming further remonstrance useless, proceeded to draw up the required summary, pausing at every sentence to enquire of his hearers if his statements were correct, and in accordance with the opinion of the majority. This précis, when completed, was submitted to the approval of Bailly and La Fayette, who ordered fifty-six thousand copies of it to be printed, and sold for the benefit of the widows and children of those who had perished during the siege. By way of recompense for his labours, Cousin Jacques was appointed secretary to the troop enrolled under the name of Volunteers of the Bastille; and a decoration, in the shape of a tricolor ribbon ornamented with a view of the fortress, was also conferred on him.

As the political horizon grew darker, the circulation of the *Lunes* gradually fell off; the tone of the journal, and the quips and cranks of its facetious editor no longer suited the popular taste, and failed to hold their own against the highly-spiced paragraphs of the *Chronique de Paris*, and the denunciatory rhapsodies of *L'Amid du Peuple*. The bankruptcy of his publisher, moreover, followed by that of several other booksellers, entailing on him the loss of a large sum of money, placed Beffroy de Reigny in an embarrassing position, and compelled him either to continue the publication of his fortnightly sheet at his own risk, or to abandon it altogether. He chose the former alternative, and for some months struggled hard to maintain his ground, "working," as he himself tells us, "eleven hours a day, and a great portion of the night," but in vain; one by one the subscribers withdrew their support, and the luckless proprietor, whose means and credit were by this time completely exhausted, had no resource but to close his doors with the valedictory announcement

that the publication of the *Lunes* was "indefinitely suspended." Being, however, fortunately for himself, of an elastic temperament, and not easily disheartened, he turned his thoughts again to the stage, and composed with his usual rapidity an impromptu called *La Fédération du Parnasse*, which had a run of thirty-one nights at the Théâtre Beaujolais, and paved the way for the most decisive success ever obtained by him, namely, *Nicodème dans la Lune*.

In those days a theatrical novelty retaining possession of the bills after fifty performances was considered an exceptional event, and few dramatists of the period could boast of having achieved a similar feat. In the case of *Nicodème*, however, four hundred successive representations only served to stimulate the curiosity of the public, enriching the manager to the extent of something over three hundred thousand crowns (nearly a million of francs), and putting about sixteen hundred livres—the droits d'auteur were then infinitesimal—into the writer's pocket. Like the *Janot* of Dorvigny and the *Pointu* of Beaunoir, the piece became at once a favourite with playgoers of every degree; the title part, created by Juliet, was subsequently acted by Brunet, and the airs were whistled and sung by every gamin and grisette in the city. Flushed with this unhopèd-for triumph, Cousin Jacques followed it up by producing *Les Deux Nicodèmes*, and afterwards *Les Trois Nicodèmes*; but neither of these enjoying the vogue of their predecessor, he brought out in 1791 *Le Club des Bonnes Gens*, which ran until the close of the season. He then started a political journal called *Le Consolateur*, in which he mainly directed the shafts of his satire against Brissot, Manuel, and Condorcet, alluding to the latter as follows: "I cannot imagine how this despicable man is allowed to escape the punishment due to his crimes." Such out-spoken language could not fail to attract the notice of the revolutionary leaders; Marat wrote to him, counselling him to employ his pen against the aristocrats, and Chaumette solicited his friendship, but to neither did he vouchsafe a reply. There was nothing in common between him and the Jacobinical demagogues; their ideas and principles were not his, and he did not scruple to tell them so. "If," he says, "you force me to salute the red cap and the tree of liberty as I pass them, I must do it; but you cannot hinder me from thinking that the one is a badge of tyranny, and the other of slavery."

Nevertheless, he felt that he was treading on dangerous ground, and after the fatal 10th of August a regard for his own safety caused him to quit Paris, and seek refuge with his brother-in-law, the curé of Vincelles-la-Rue. There he remained for nearly a year, and did not return to the capital until he had provided himself with a certificate of good conduct and patriotism signed by the municipal authorities of the commune. The Reign of Terror was then at its height; but, notwithstanding his fear of arrest—for he was a strange mixture of rashness and constitutional timidity—he could not refrain from expressing his sympathies with the moderate party, and his detestation of the excesses committed by those in power. Aware of his sensitive nervousness, his friends delighted in exaggerating the peril to which they pretended he was exposed; one day he was told that Camille Desmoulins had put a price on his head, and on another occasion that Robespierre had been heard to say: "I am not surprised that Cousin Jacques should compose agreeable melodies" (he had just produced an operetta at one of the smaller theatres); "the swan never sings better than at the moment of his death." Alarmed by these inventions, he wrote to André Dumont, member of the Assembly, petitioning to be put on his trial if suspected, and affirming that his only crime consisted in having endeavoured throughout his life to benefit his fellow-creatures. On the back of this letter, afterwards forming part of M. de Soleinne's autographic collection, is the following note in Dumont's handwriting: "To say by way of answer that some one has been making a fool of Cousin Jacques." However, probably on account of some fresh imprudence, an order for his arrest was at length issued by the Committee of Public Safety; and he only escaped being brought to judgment by the interference and protection of his brother Beffroy de Beauvoir, at that time a deputy of the Convention.

The arrival of Thermidor and the fall of Robespierre relieved him from the consequences of his temerity, and from that date his occupation as a political pamphleteer was at an end; once more free to indulge his old predilection for the theatre, he found the public as ready to applaud him as of yore, and in his *Habit de Noces*, and *La Petite Nanette*,* showed that he

had lost nothing of his original vivacity. In 1805 he published, under the title of *Soirées Chantantes*, a complete collection of his melodies, the grace and simplicity of which have been justly praised by Cherubini, Méhul, and Boieldieu; and died in Paris, December 17, 1811, having just completed his fifty-fourth year. His portrait, engraved by Jonxis after Violet, represents his profile surmounted by a moon; underneath are inscribed the following lines:

*Il est des fous dont les accés charmants
A la gaité joignent les sentiments :
Des fous heureux, dont la plume légère
Aux jeux du Pinde unit ceux de Cythère."*

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXIX. A WOMAN'S VOICE BRINGS TO HAROLD A DREAM OF THE PAST.

THE news of Mauvain's return spread far and wide over the Silver Isle, and was not hailed with satisfaction. The prevailing thought with regard to him was, "We have had enough of strangers." This expression of feeling concerned neither Evangeline nor Margaret Sylvester, two of the three strangers living on the isle. It touched only Rarf the hunchback.

A week after the exchange of the letters between Mauvain and the islanders, Harold—he and Mauvain being still on board ship—said to Mauvain:

"I sigh for mother earth; this monotony of rest, this eternal rocking to and fro, is sapping the very foundations of my being."

"I, too, am weary of it," said Mauvain.

"Let us impart variety into the hours; we will go ashore."

"I do not stir from the ship until my house is ready to receive me."

"Which according to reckoning—I am becoming quite nautical in my expressions—will not be for many days yet. I cannot endure this uneventful routine any longer; I shall pay my respects to the soil. Accompany me in disguise, and we will seek adventure. No? Mauvain, your name is consistency. Well, I must go alone. You will see me again in the evening. Entrust me with a commission."

"Ascertain for me, if you can, the exact day upon which this family of the Sylvesters will oblige me by quitting my house, and if in a gentle way you can intimate to them that they are lagging somewhat and are thereby entailing discomfort upon me,

* An ancient sign-board, "*A la Petite Nanette*," still hangs over a shop door in the Rue du Four Saint-Germain.

I shall not object. You may say to them, if you please, in the event of their showing a disposition to condemn me to these planks for a longer time than is absolutely necessary, that I should regret to be compelled to enforce my rights."

"By force, Mauvain?"

"If necessary."

"It would be neither prudent nor agreeable to adopt such a course. I should advise you not to attempt it."

"I am accustomed to take my own advice, and shape my own course, Harold."

"I know it, Mauvain. Forgive me for supposing it possible you could ever be in error. Adieu till evening."

It was noon when he left the ship, and night before he returned.

Mauvain, waiting on deck for his friend, greeted him immediately with the question:

"How were you received?"

"A moment, Mauvain. I am really, in my idle way, full of news, but it must filtrate slowly, my mind being dilatory. You have wine there." Harold filled a large glass, and emptied it at a draught. "Nectar. Life is worth having."

"Have you not eaten since you left the ship?"

"A little. I asked for fruit, and they gave it to me; but they did not give it without the asking; and only one man invited me to his house. This cigar, Mauvain, has a delicious flavour. Life is a precious gift. I foresee more unlikely things than that I should become the grossest of materialists. How was I received? Various. By some who did not know me I was looked upon, I think, as a curiosity. Our friends yonder are not accustomed to fine gentlemen."

"I am beginning to alter my opinion of them. It may be nearer the mark to say that they are not accustomed to gentlemen. A distinction with a difference."

"Decidedly; but I prefer my own words in this instance, for I am not at all certain that the Silver Isle is without specimens of the gentleman, pure and simple—as in sober truth he ought to be. I have seen to-day men whose manners would not disgrace a court, men whose stateliness was natural. Their dignity becomes them the better because, in my inexperienced eyes, it lacks artificiality."

"Ah, I have sometimes thought that you were better fitted for the grove than the court."

"If that be so, I shall be here in my

element. To nearly every person I met on the isle I was a stranger, and as I have said, I was regarded as a curiosity. It might pay us, Mauvain, to exhibit ourselves in cages."

"Is it possible, Harold, for you to speak seriously for three consecutive minutes?"

"I do not know; I have never tried. Anything in the shape of effort is eminently distasteful to me. When I have a thing to tell, I must tell it my own way. Among the strangers on the isle there were, perhaps, a dozen men and women who had a remembrance of me. One or two of these, recognising me, smiled, and then checked their smiles; the others, recognising me, frowned, and did not check their frowns. It set me thinking a little. I asked for Father Sebastian; he is dead. So, there I found myself a stranger, in a land of strangers, and impressed with the distressing conviction that with the men and women of the isle I was a failure. But happily for me there are children in the world. Mauvain, I have always been successful with children, and those I met on the Silver Isle won my heart, as I may say without vanity I won theirs."

"It is not difficult to believe, Harold. You have a sunny manner, and even the wise are compelled to overlook your faults when they come in contact with you. I myself, having in your absence been angry with you for some trifling matter, have forgotten my anger when you have appeared. You possess a charming magnetism, Harold."

"You are graciousness itself. But I am afraid that I am not magnetic to the serious-minded; when they and I come into contact, it is I who am magnetised. There is a certain attractiveness in our conversations, Mauvain, upon which I have occasionally pondered. They resemble the flight of a swallow. We never seem able to come straight to the point. We are full of interludes——"

"Of your creation, Harold; I am the audience, you the actor."

"Is it so? I hope I play my part well. The present conversation is a case in point. Here am I speaking to you upon a serious subject——"

"A serious subject!" exclaimed Mauvain, laughing.

"Yes. Have I not approached it? It shows the trivial nature of my mind. I will come to it very soon. I was speaking of the reception I met with on the isle. In brief: Some looked upon me as a curiosity,

some smiled upon me, and then frowned; some frowned upon me, and then did not smile; which was a pity, as it disturbed the balance. Children spring into my arms at my invitation, and allowed me to fondle them; but strangely enough their parents took them from me, without 'with your leave' or 'by your leave.' Even two or three maidens, who seemed inclined to receive me agreeably, were drawn out of the reach of my fascinations. I deplored this deeply, for they were very fair. Upon the whole, therefore, I am inclined to the belief that I was right when I told you that the letter the islanders sent in reply to yours had a flavour of vinegar about it. They will not erect triumphal arches when you land."

"It matters not; I shall be able to win them over."

"I executed your commission. The Sylvesters are building a house into which they will remove as soon as it is completed. This will occupy them another week. The house is of wood, and only one storey, covering a large space of ground. Those are the most sensible tenements; it is as Nature intended us to live. The Sylvesters appear to hold a station on the isle; they are respected. The islanders have a store of silver belonging to you. The silver mine you discovered, and made yours by purchase of the land, has been occasionally worked—but not during the last few years—and the islanders have kept faithful account of the royalty due to you. I was requested to hand this paper to you. It is a statement of dates and weight of silver produced, which no doubt you will find correct."

"You are forgetting the serious subject, Harold."

"I am not likely to, Mauvain; it will unfold itself presently. It was not my good fortune until the evening to meet with the Sylvesters who have done you the honour to occupy your house in your absence. They are under an obligation to you; but it seems they have squared accounts by rendering you an obligation."

"In what way?"

"By taking charge of Evangeline; she has lived with them as their child."

"Was not her father a sufficient guardian?"

"Her father?"

"Ranf."

"Pardon me; I forgot. Upon that point I am not informed."

"I must be dull-witted, Harold, for I cannot see how these Sylvesters have laid

me under an obligation by adopting even so ill-favoured a being as Evangeline as their child. It was a matter which concerned only themselves and the hunchback."

"You forget the nature of the letter you wrote to the islanders when you sent Ranf and Evangeline in my charge to the Silver Isle. In the house of a magistrate, the only house of which the doors were open to me, is a box, inscribed with your name. This box contains a record of all transactions and doings in which you bear a part; the letter I delivered to Father Sebastian is there, and I asked to see it. In it you say: 'I send you a trust which I ask you to accept in kindly remembrance of one who owes you already a debt of gratitude he can never repay; by doing so you will confer upon me an inestimable obligation.' Evangeline, being then a child, it was naturally supposed that your wishes would be better carried out if she were adopted by a family who had children of their own with whom Evangeline could associate."

"Let me think a moment, Harold. Ranf appeared to be devoted to his child. His consent to the separation had to be obtained."

"He gave it freely."

"It is incomprehensible."

"You would not undertake to judge the actions of such a creature as Ranf by an ordinary standard. He may have wished to show he was capable of self-sacrifice. Be that as it may, Evangeline has lived with the Sylvesters, apart from Ranf, and thus you are in some sense under an obligation to them. I was curious about these Sylvesters, on Evangeline's account more than on their own—I see a look of enquiry in your eyes."

"I am endeavouring to discover why you take so singular an interest in this Evangeline."

"Was I not her sponsor on the isle?"

"And have you not fashioned her in stone? Has the hideous a fascination for you as well as the beautiful? By the way, she lives?"

"So I am informed."

"You did not see her, then?"

"No."

"And Ranf? Does he still favour the earth with his presence?"

"Yes. Him I shall see to-morrow."

"Continue. I interrupted you at the words, 'you were curious about these Sylvesters.'"

"I asked where they were to be found, and was told they were absent. In the

evening, as I was making my way to the boat which was waiting for me, I heard the voice of a woman, singing. The voice was soft and tender, and very sweet. Only once before in my life have I heard such singing, and then, Mauvain, you were in my company. The woman who was singing was walking towards me, but owing to a curve in the path—a narrow path, between hedges—she was not yet in sight. Mauvain, I cannot describe to you the impression this strangely sweet voice had upon me. It recalled a scene in the past which has lived in my memory, but has never been so boldly reproduced. Why, Mauvain, if you will believe me, the narrow lane through which I was walking vanished from my sight, and with it the sunset which glorified the heavens. For a moment the present was suspended, and I saw a room in which three men were sitting, you, I, and another. I was idle; you and the third were playing for high stakes. The room was only partially lighted up; the distant part of it was in shadow. Moving in the shadow was a girl, almost a child, exquisite as a dream; and standing near her, motionless, was another, older than the dancer, singing softly in a voice as sweet as that which now I heard. The vision lasted but for a moment, and I was again standing between the fragrant hedges in the narrow lane. The woman approached me, and I stood aside to allow her to pass. Our eyes met. Mauvain, you spoke just now of magnetism. Some magnetism was at work at the moment of our meeting; it flashed from her eyes into mine, from my eyes into hers, and it held us spell-bound, as in a magic chain."

"A young woman, and alone," said Mauvain, lighting another cigar, and handing his case to Harold. "I always take an interest in these adventures. You were fortunate that there were no churls near to object to your paying this pretty creature the attentions of a gentleman."

"She was at least forty years of age, and she spoke no word to me, and I no word to her. The spell broken, she passed away in silence. At a distance I followed her until I met a person of whom I asked the woman's name. It was Margaret."

"Not Margaret only. Your cigar is out, Harold. Light a fresh one, from mine. What other name does this woman bear?"

"Sylvester. Now let me tell you what I learnt of the history of this woman."

"With pleasure. You have been industrious, Harold."

"She is not a native of the Silver Isle. Her husband and her husband's father, both of whom were born here, had many years ago a vagrant fit which nothing could cure but a spell of adventure in the old world. They left the Silver Isle, not knowing whether they should ever return to it. At that time Margaret's husband was a boy, and he and his father in the old world led a wandering life as travelling actors—you are becoming interested, I see. When the boy had grown to manhood he and Margaret met, and from that time were never separated. The usual story, Mauvain—they loved."

"You are a polished story-teller, Harold; you invest the commonest incidents with a certain interest. Margaret was alone when they met."

"So far alone that she had no relatives; she was an orphan. The odd part of the affair is that Margaret, at the time she and the Sylvesters were thrown into each other's company, was leading the same kind of life as themselves—had, in fact, been brought up to it."

"There is nothing very odd in it. A simple coincidence, of a kind upon which weak-minded and superstitious people hang absurd and childish theories."

"That is all you see in it, Mauvain."

"That is all. What more do you expect me to see?"

"I cannot say. Mauvain, enlighten me. I have already confessed that I have made a study of you. Is there nothing beneath the surface?"

"You are going a little too far, Harold."

"Ah, if I had your temperament! You are not easily disturbed, Mauvain."

"Not easily."

"I envy you. For pure enjoyment of life I know no one whose qualities are superior to yours."

"Depend upon it, Harold, my philosophy is the best. You have not told me what brought Margaret to the Silver Isle."

"The Sylvesters were not fortunate in the old world; and when the son Paul and Margaret were married they adopted the sensible course of returning to the Silver Isle, in which, if ambitious aspirations cannot be realised, peace and plenty can at least be depended on."

"This, then, is the serious subject you wished to speak of."

"You mistake, Mauvain," replied Harold, in a tone of surprise; "there is nothing

serious in what I have told you. A web of odd fragments, strung together in a fanciful way by a man too fond of dreaming. You should understand me better by this time. The serious part of my communication refers to Ranf."

"Now you really interest me, Harold."

"You said lately that Ranf once boasted to you that a woman loved him. Love is all the theme, and Ranf the hero. Would you believe there are sinners on the Silver Isle—fair sinners who love not wisely? And that such a man should inspire the passion! And yet it is gravely averred that between Ranf and some woman on the isle love-passages have taken place. My knowledge of the affair extends thus far. It being known that I was on the isle, a messenger seeks me, and requests me to accompany him to the house of a magistrate before whom and others Ranf is summoned to appear to-morrow. To this magistrate, a greybeard, I accordingly present myself. 'You are come in good time,' says the gentleman to me, and forthwith launches into the subject, pledging me beforehand not to make it common talk. Ranf, it appears, has led a lonely life upon the isle, having one whole friend in Evangeline, and some half friends in the members of the Sylvester family. Add to these the woman whom the hunchback has bewitched, and the list of those favourably disposed to him is complete. The magistrate expressed himself to me in these terms: 'During the years,' he said, 'that the hunchback has lived upon the isle, he has broken no law within our knowledge. He has held aloof from us, but that he was free to do. He has not attended our churches' (by the way, Mauvain, that is a duty in which we must not fail; the islanders evidently set store upon it, and it will invest us with an air of sanctity) 'He has not attended our churches,' said the magistrate, 'but in that he was also entitled to be free; it is a matter affecting the conscience, and we dictate to no man's. His residence on the isle was not agreeable to us, but we had made him welcome here, and so long as he openly violated no law, and did not brawl or create dissension, the welcome could not be withdrawn. An explanation

is now to be demanded of him, and it is but just that you and Mauvain, who are responsible for his presence among us, should attend to hear what charge is to be brought against him.' It was then that it occurred to me to ask whether the letter you gave me for Father Sebastian was in existence; it was produced from the box I told you of inscribed with your name. I scarcely knew what answer to make to the request for our attendance."

"You did not answer for my movements, Harold."

"No, only for my own. I promised to attend, and said that I would mention the matter to you."

"I shall not trouble myself; an account from your lips of what transpires will be infinitely more diverting. Ranf is an insolent knave, and age cannot have improved him. Is it certain that he will obey the summons?"

"It appears to be doubtful; he has made himself not only disliked, but feared. However, to-morrow will show whether, having come into collision with the islanders, he will risk open warfare with them. I confess to looking forward to the entertainment with pleasurable anticipation; and I am more than curious to see the kind of woman Ranf has managed to beguile. Mauvain, it occurs to me that our residence on the isle is likely to be attended with some excitement and amusement. Are you going below? I shall remain on deck, and dream of one woman's fair face and another woman's sweet voice. The nightingale's notes are not so sweet."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXXVIII. THE DUKE RETURNS TO OFFICE.

THAT farewell took place on the Friday morning. Tregear, as he walked out of the square, knew now that he had been the cause of a great shipwreck. At first when that passionate love had been declared—he could hardly remember whether with the fuller passion by him or by her—he had been as a god walking upon air. That she, who seemed to be so much above him, should have owned that she was all his own seemed then to be world enough for him. For a few weeks he lived a hero to himself, and was able to tell himself that for him the glory of a passion was sufficient. In those halcyon moments no common human care is allowed to intrude itself. To one who has thus entered in upon the heroism of romance his own daily work, his dinners, clothes, income, father and mother, sisters and brothers, his own street and house, are nothing. Hunting, shooting, rowing, Alpine-climbing, even speeches in Parliament—if they perchance have been attained to—all become leather or prunella. The heavens have been opened to him, and he walks among them like a god. So it had been with Tregear. Then had come the second phase of his passion—which is also not uncommon to young men who soar high in their first assaults. He was told that it would not do; and was not so told by a hard-hearted parent, but by the young lady herself. And she had spoken so reasonably that he had yielded, and had walked away with that sudden feeling of a vile return to his own mean belongings to his lodgings

and his income, which not a few ambitious young men have experienced. But she had convinced him. Then had come the journey to Italy, and the reader knows all the rest. He certainly had not derogated in transferring his affections—but it may be doubted whether in this second love he had walked among the stars as in the first. A man can hardly mount twice among the stars. But he had been as eager, and as true. And he had succeeded, without any flaw on his conscience. It had been agreed, when that first disruption took place, that he and Mabel should be friends; and, as to a friend, he had told her of his hopes. When first she had mingled something of sarcasm with her congratulations, though it had annoyed him, it had hardly made him unhappy. When she called him Romeo, and spoke of herself as Rosaline, he took her remark as indicating some petulance rather than an enduring love. That had been womanly, and he could forgive it. He had his other great and solid happiness to support him. Then he had believed that she would soon marry, if not Silverbridge, then some other fitting young nobleman, and that all would be well. But now things were very far from well. The storm which was now howling round her afflicted him much.

Perhaps the bitterest feeling of all was that her love should have been so much stronger, so much more enduring, than his own. He could not but remember how in his first agony he had blamed her because she had declared that they should be severed. He had then told himself that such severing would be to him impossible, and that had her nature been as high as his, it would have been as impossible to her. Which nature must he now regard as the higher? She had done her best to rid herself of the

load of her passion and had failed. But he had freed himself with convenient haste. All that he had said as to the manliness of conquering grief had been wise enough. But still he could not quit himself of some feeling of disgrace, in that he had changed and she had not. He tried to comfort himself with reflecting that Mary was all his own—that in that matter he had been victorious and happy—but for an hour or two he thought more of Mabel than of Mary.

When the time came in which he could employ himself he called for Silverbridge, and they walked together across the park to Westminster. Silverbridge was gay and full of eagerness as to the coming ministerial statement, but Tregear could not turn his mind from the work of the morning. "I don't seem to care very much about it," he said at last.

"I do care very much," said Silverbridge.

"What difference will it make?"

"I breakfasted with the governor this morning, and I have not seen him in such good spirits since—— well for a long time."

The date to which Silverbridge would have referred, had he not checked himself, was that of the evening on which it had been agreed between him and his father that Mabel Grex should be promoted to the seat of highest honour in the house of Palliser; but that was a matter which must henceforward be buried in silence. "He did not say as much, but I feel perfectly sure that he and Mr. Monk have arranged a new government."

"I don't see any matter for joy in that to Conservatives like you and me."

"He is my father—and, as he is to be your father-in-law, I should have thought that you might have been pleased."

"Oh, yes; if he likes it. But I have heard so often of the crushing cares of office, and I had thought that of all living men he had been the most crushed by them."

All that had to be done in the House of Commons on that afternoon was finished before five o'clock. By half-past five the House, and all the purlieus of the House, were deserted. And yet at four, immediately after prayers, there had been such a crowd that members had been unable to find seats. Tregear and Silverbridge, having been early, had succeeded, but those who had been less careful were obliged to listen as best they could in the galleries. The stretching out of necks and the holding of hands behind the ears did not last long. Sir Timothy had not had much to say, but what he did say was spoken with a dignity

which seemed to anticipate future exaltation rather than present downfall. There had arisen a question in regard to revenue—he need hardly tell them that it was that question in reference to brewers' licenses to which the honourable gentleman opposite had alluded on the previous day—as to which, unfortunately, he was not in accord with his noble friend the Prime Minister. Under the circumstances it was hardly possible that they should at once proceed to business, and he therefore moved that the House should stand adjourned till Tuesday next. That was the whole statement.

Not very long afterwards the Prime Minister made another statement in the House of Lords. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer had very suddenly resigned, and had thereby broken up the Ministry, he had found himself compelled to place his resignation in the hands of Her Majesty. Then that House was also adjourned. On that afternoon all the clubs were alive with admiration at the great cleverness displayed by Sir Timothy in this transaction. It was not only that he had succeeded in breaking up the Ministry, and that he had done this without incurring violent disgrace; but he had so done it as to throw all the reproach upon his late unfortunate colleague. It was thus that Mr. Lupton explained it. Sir Timothy had been at the pains to ascertain on what matters connected with the revenue, Lord Drummond—or Lord Drummond's closet advisers—had opinions of their own, opinions strong enough not to be abandoned; and having discovered that, he also discovered arguments on which to found an exactly contrary opinion. But as the revenue had been entrusted specially to his unworthy hands, he was entitled to his own opinion on this matter. "The majority of the House," said Mr. Lupton, "and the entire public, will no doubt give him credit for great self-abnegation."

All this happened on the Friday. During the Saturday it was considered probable that the Cabinet would come to terms with itself, and that internal wounds would be healed. The general opinion was that Lord Drummond would give way. But on the Sunday morning it was understood that Lord Drummond would not yield. It was reported that Lord Drummond was willing to purchase his separation from Sir Timothy even at the expense of his office. That Sir Timothy should give way seemed to be impossible. Had he done so it would have been impossible for him to recover the

respect of the House. Then it was rumoured that two or three others had gone with Sir Timothy. And on Monday morning it was proclaimed that the Prime Minister was not in a condition to withdraw his resignation. On the Tuesday the House met, and Mr. Monk announced, still from the opposition benches, that he had that morning been with the Queen. Then there was another adjournment, and all the Liberals knew that the gates of Paradise were again about to be opened to them.

This is only interesting to us as affecting the happiness and character of our duke. He had consented to assist Mr. Monk in forming a government, and to take office under Mr. Monk's leadership. He had had many contests with himself before he could bring himself to this submission. He knew that if anything could once again make him contented, it would be work; he knew that if he could serve his country it was his duty to serve it; and he knew also that it was only by the adhesion of such men as himself that the traditions of his party could be maintained. But he had been Prime Minister—and he was sure he could never be Prime Minister again. There are in all matters certain little, almost hidden, signs, by which we can measure within our own bosoms the extent of our successes and our failures. Our duke's friends had told him that his Ministry had been serviceable to the country; but no one had ever suggested to him that he would again be asked to fill the place which he had filled. He had stopped a gap. He would beforehand have declared himself willing to serve his country, even in this way; but having done so—having done that and no more than that—he felt that he had failed. He had in his soreness declared to himself that he would never more take office. He had much to do to overcome this promise to himself; but when he had brought himself to submit he was certainly a happier man.

There was no going to see the Queen. That on the present occasion was done by Mr. Monk. But on the Wednesday his name appeared in the list of the new Cabinet as President of the Council. He was perhaps a little fidgety, a little too anxious to employ himself and to be employed, a little too desirous of immediate work; but still he was happy and gracious to those around him. "I suppose you like that particular office," Silverbridge said to him.

"Well; yes—not best of all, you know," and he smiled as he made this admission.

"You mean Prime Minister."

"No; indeed, I don't. I am inclined to think that the Premier should always sit in your House. No, Silverbridge, if I could have my way—which is of course impossible, for I cannot put off my honours—I would return to my old place. I would return to the Exchequer, where the work is hard and certain, where a man can do, or at any rate attempt to do, some special thing. A man there, if he stick to that and does not travel beyond it, need not be popular, need not be a partisan, need not be eloquent, need not be a courtier. He should understand his profession, as should a lawyer or a doctor. If he does that thoroughly, he can serve his country without recourse to that parliamentary strategy for which I know that I am unfit."

"You can't do that in the House of Lords, sir."

"No; no. I wish the title could have passed over my head, Silverbridge, and gone to you at once. I think we both should have been suited better. But there are things which one should not consider. Even in this place I may perhaps do something. Shall you attack us very bitterly?"

"I am about the only man who does not mean to make any change."

"How so?"

"I shall stay where I am—on the Government side of the House."

"Are you clear about that, my boy?"

"Quite clear."

"Such changes should not be made without very much consideration."

"I have already written to them at Silverbridge and have had three or four answers. Mr. De Boung says that the borough is more than grateful. Mr. Sprott regrets it much, and suggests a few months' consideration. Mr. Spurgeon seems to think it does not signify."

"That is hardly complimentary."

"No—not to me. But he is very civil to the family. As long as a Palliser represents the borough, Mr. Spurgeon thinks that it does not matter much on which side he may sit. I have had my little vagary, and I don't think that I shall change again."

"I suppose it is your republican bride-elect who has done that," said the duke, laughing.

CHAPTER LXXIX. THE FIRST WEDDING.

As Easter Sunday fell on the 17th April, and as the arrangement of the new Cabinet, with its inferior offices, was not completed till the 6th of that month, there was only

just time for the new elections before the holidays. Mr. Monk sat on his bench so comfortably that he hardly seemed ever to have been off it. And Phineas Finn resumed the peculiar ministerial tone of voice, just as though he had never allowed himself to use the free and indignant strains of opposition. As to a majority—nothing as yet was known about that. Some few besides Silverbridge might probably transfer themselves to the Government. None of the Ministers lost their seats at the new elections. The opposite party seemed for a while to have been paralysed by the defection of Sir Timothy, and men who liked a quiet life were able to comfort themselves with the reflection that nothing could be done this session.

For our lovers this was convenient. Neither of them would have allowed their parliamentary energies to have interfered at such a crisis with his domestic affairs; but still it was well to have time at command. The day for the marriage of Isabel and Silverbridge had been now fixed. That was to take place on the Wednesday after Easter, and was to be celebrated by special royal favour in the chapel at Whitehall. All the Pallisers would be there, and all the relations of all the Pallisers, all the ambassadors, and of course all the Americans in London. In the meantime the whole party, including the new President of the Council, were down at Matching. Even Isabel, though it must be presumed that she had much to do in looking after her bridal garments, was able to be there for a day or two. But Tregear was the person to whom this visit was of the greatest importance.

He had been allowed to see Lady Mary in London, but hardly to do more than see her. With her he had been alone for about five minutes, and then cruel circumstances—circumstances, however, which were not permanently cruel—had separated them. All their great difficulties had been settled, and no doubt they were happy. Tregear, though he had been as it were received into grace by that glass of wine, still had not entered into the intimacies of the house. This he felt himself. He had been told that he had better restrain himself from writing to Mary, and he had restrained himself. He had therefore no immediate opportunity of creeping into that perfect intimacy with the house and household which is generally accorded to a promised son-in-law.

On this occasion he travelled down alone, and as he approached the house he, who

was not by nature timid, felt himself to be somewhat cowed. That the duke should not be cold to him was almost impossible. Of course he was there in opposition to the duke's wishes. Even Silverbridge had never quite liked the match. Of course he was to have all that he desired. Of course he was the most fortunate of men. Of course no man had ever stronger reason to be contented with the girl he loved. But still his heart was a little low as he was driven up to the door.

The first person whom he saw was the duke himself, who, as the fly from the station arrived, was returning from his walk. "You are welcome to Matching," he said, taking of his hat with something of ceremony. This was said before the servants, but Tregear was then led into the study and the door was closed. "I never do anything by halves, Mr. Tregear," he said. "Since it is to be so you shall be the same to me as though you had come under other auspices. Of yourself personally I hear all that is good. Consider yourself at home here, and in all things use me as your friend." Tregear endeavoured to make some reply, but could not find words that were fitting. "I think that the young people are out," continued the duke. "Mr. Warburton will help you to find them if you like to go upon the search." The words had been very gracious, but still there was something in the manner of the man which made Tregear find it almost impossible to regard him as he might have regarded another father-in-law. He had often heard the duke spoken of as a man who could become awful if he pleased, almost without an effort. He had been told of the man's mingled simplicity, courtesy, and self-assertion, against which no impudence or raillery could prevail. And now he seemed to understand it.

He was not driven to go under the private secretary's escort in quest of the young people. Mary had understood her business much better than that. "If you please, sir, Lady Mary is in the little drawing-room," said a well-arrayed young girl to him as soon as the duke's door was closed. This was Lady Mary's own maid, who had been on the look-out for the fly. Lady Mary had known all details, as to the arrival of the trains and the length of the journey from the station, and had not been walking with the other young people when the duke had intercepted her lover. Even that delay she had thought was hard. The discreet maid opened the door

of the little drawing-room, and discreetly closed it instantly. "At last!" she said, throwing herself into his arms.

"Yes, at last."

On this occasion time did not envy them. The long afternoons of spring had come, and as Tregear had reached the house between four and five they were able to go out together before the sun set. "No," she said, when he came to enquire as to her life during the last twelve months; "you had not much to be afraid of as to my forgetting."

"But when everything was against me?"

"One thing was not against you. You ought to have been sure of that."

"And so I was. And yet I felt that I ought not to have been sure. Sometimes, in my solitude, I used to think that I myself had been wrong. I began to doubt whether under any circumstances I could have been justified in asking your father's daughter to be my wife."

"Because of his rank?"

"Not so much his rank as his money."

"Ought that to be considered?"

"A poor man who marries a rich woman will always be suspected."

"Because people are so mean and poor-spirited—and because they think that money is more than anything else. It should be nothing at all in such matters. I don't know how it can be anything. They have been saying that to me all along—as though one were to stop to think whether one was rich or poor." Tregear, when this was said, could not but remember that a time not very much prior to that at which Mary had not stopped to think, neither for a while had he and Mabel. "I suppose it was worse for me than for you," she added.

"I hope not."

"But it was, Frank; and therefore I ought to have it made up to me now. It was very bad to be alone here, particularly when I felt that papa always looked at me as though I were a sinner. He did not mean it, but he could not help looking at me like that. And there was nobody to whom I could say a word."

"It was pretty much the same with me."

"Yes; but you were not offending a father who could not keep himself from looking reproaches at you. I was like a boy at school who had been put into Coventry. And then they sent me to Lady Cantrip!"

"Was that very bad?"

"I do believe that if I were a young woman with a well-ordered mind, I should

feel myself very much indebted to Lady Cantrip. She had a terrible task of it. But I could not teach myself to like her. I believe she knew all through that I should get my way at last."

"That ought to have made you friends."

"But yet she tried everything she could, And when I told her about that meeting up at Lord Grex's, she was so shocked! Do you remember that?"

"Do I remember it?"

"Were not you shocked?" This question was not to be answered by any word. "I was," she continued. "It was an awful thing to do; but I was determined to show them all that I was in earnest. Do you remember how Miss Cassewary looked?"

"Miss Cassewary knew all about it."

"I daresay she did. And so I suppose did Mabel Grex. I had thought that perhaps I might make Mabel a confidante,—but——" Then she looked up into his face.

"But what?"

"You like Mabel, do you not? I do."

"I like her very, very much."

"Perhaps you have liked her too well for that—eh, Frank?"

"Too well for what?"

"That she should have heard all that I had to say about you with sympathy. If so, I am so sorry."

"You need not fear that I have ever for a moment been untrue either to her or you."

"I am sure you have not to me. Poor Mabel! Then they took me to Custins. That was worst of all. I cannot quite tell you what happened there." Of course he asked her—but, as she had said, she could not quite tell him about Lord Popplecourt.

The next morning the duke asked his guest in a playful tone what was his Christian name. It could hardly be that he should not have known, but yet he asked the question.

"Francis Oliphant," said Tregear.

"Those are two Christian names, I suppose, but what do they call you at home?"

"Frank," whispered Mary, who was with them.

"Then I will call you Frank, if you will allow me. The use of Christian names I think is pleasant and hardly common enough among us. I almost forget my own boy's name because the practice has grown up of calling him by a title."

"I am going to call him Abraham," said Isabel.

"Abraham is a good name; only I do not

think he got it from his godfathers and godmothers."

"Who can call a man Plantagenet? I should as soon think of calling my father-in-law Cœur de Lion."

"So he is," said Mary. Whereupon the duke kissed the two girls and went his way—showing that by this time he had adopted the one and the proposed husband of the other into his heart.

The day before the duke started for London to be present at the grand marriage he sent for Frank. "I suppose," said he, "that you would wish that some time should be fixed for your own marriage." To this the accepted suitor of course assented. "But before we can do that something must be settled about—money." Tregear when he heard this became hot all over, and felt that he could not restrain his blushes. Such must be the feeling of a man when he finds himself compelled to own to a girl's father that he intends to live upon her money and not upon his own. "I do not like to be troublesome," continued the duke, "or to ask questions which might seem to be impertinent."

"Oh, no! Of course I feel my position. I can only say that it was not because your daughter might probably have money that I first sought her love."

"It shall be so received. And now—But perhaps it will be best that you should arrange all this with my man of business. Mr. Morton shall be instructed. Mr. Morton lives near my place in Barsetshire, but is now in London. If you will call on him he shall tell you what I would suggest. I hope you will find that your affairs will be comfortable. And now as to the time."

Isabel's wedding was declared by the newspapers to have been one of the most brilliant remembered in the metropolis. There were six bridesmaids, of whom of course Mary was one—and of whom poor Lady Mabel Grex was equally of course not another. Poor Lady Mabel was at this time with Miss Cassewary at Grex, paying what she believed would be a last visit to the old family home. Among the others were two American girls, brought into that august society for the sake of courtesy rather than of personal love. And there were two other Palliser girls, and a Scotch McCloskie cousin. The breakfast was of course given by Mr. Boncassen at his house in Brook Street, where the bridal presents were displayed; and not only were they displayed, but

a list of them, with an approximating statement as to their value, appeared in one or two of the next day's newspapers—as to which terrible sin against good taste neither was Mr. or Mrs. Boncassen guilty. But in these days, in which such splendid things are done on so very splendid a scale, a young lady cannot herself lay out her friend's gifts so as to be properly seen by her friends. Some well-skilled, well-paid hand is needed even for that, and hence comes this public information on affairs which should surely be private. In our grandmothers' time the happy bride's happy mother herself compounded the cake; or at any rate the trusted house-keeper. But we all know that terrible tower of silver which now stands niddle-nodding with its appendages of flags and spears on the modern wedding breakfast table. It will come to pass with some of us soon that we must deny ourselves the pleasure of having young friends, because their marriage presents are so costly.

Poor Mrs. Boncassen had not perhaps a happy time with her august guests on that morning; but when she retired to give Isabel her last kiss in privacy she did feel proud to think that her daughter would some day be an English duchess.

CHAPTER LXXX. THE SECOND WEDDING.

NOVEMBER is not altogether an hymeneal month, but it was not till November that Lady Mabel Palliser became the wife of Frank Tregear. It was postponed a little, perhaps, in order that the Silverbridges—as they were now called—might be present. The Silverbridges, who were now quite Darby and Joan, had gone to the States when the Session had been brought to a close early in August, and had remained there nearly three months. Isabel had taken infinite pleasure in showing her English husband to her American friends, and the American friends had no doubt taken a pride in seeing so glorious a British husband in the hands of an American wife. Everything was new to Silverbridge, and he was happy in his new possession. She too enjoyed it infinitely, and so it happened that they had been unwilling to curtail their sojourn. But in November they had to return, because Mary had declared that her marriage should be postponed till it could be graced by the presence of her elder brother.

The marriage of Silverbridge had been august. There had been a manifest intention that it should be so. Nobody knew with whom this originated. Mrs. Boncassen

had probably been told that it ought to be so, and Mr. Boncassen had been willing to pay the bill. External forces had perhaps operated. The duke had simply been passive and obedient. There had, however, been a general feeling that the bride of the heir of the house of Omnium should be produced to the world amidst a blaze of trumpets and a glare of torches. So it had been. But both the duke and Mary were determined that this wedding should be different. It was to take place at Matching, and none would be present but they who were staying in the house, or who lived around—such as tenants and dependents. Four clergymen united their forces to tie Isabel to her husband, one of whom was a bishop, one a canon, and the two others royal chaplains; but there was only to be the vicar of the parish at Matching. And indeed there were no guests in the house except the two bridesmaids and Mr. and Mrs. Finn. As to Mrs. Finn, Mary had made a request, and then the duke had suggested that the husband should be asked to accompany his wife.

It was very pretty. The church itself is pretty, standing in the park, close to the old Priory, not above three hundred yards from the house. And they all walked, taking the broad path through the ruins, going under that figure of Sir Guy which Silverbridge had pointed out to Isabel when they had been whispering there together. The duke led the way with his girl upon his arm. The two bridesmaids followed. Then Silverbridge and his wife, with Phineas and his wife. Gerald and the bridegroom accompanied them, belonging as it were to the same party! It was very rustic; almost improper! "This is altogether wrong, you know," said Gerald. "You should appear coming from some other part of the world, as if you were almost unexpected. You ought not to have been in the house at all, and certainly should have gone under disguise."

There had been rich presents too on this occasion, but they were shown to none except to Mrs. Finn and the bridesmaids—and perhaps to the favoured servants of the house. At any rate there was nothing said of them in the newspapers. One present there was—given not to the bride but to the bridegroom—which he showed to no one except to her. This came to him only on the morning of his marriage, and the envelope containing it bore the postmark of Sedbergh. He knew the handwriting well before he opened the parcel. It contained a small signet-ring with his crest, and with

it there were but a few words written on a scrap of paper. "I pray that you may be happy. This was to have been given to you long ago, but I kept it back because of that decision." He showed the ring to Lady Mary, and told her it had come from Lady Mabel—but the scrap of paper no one saw but himself.

Perhaps the matter most remarkable in the wedding was the hilarity of the duke. One who did not know him well might have said that he was a man with very few cares, and who now took special joy in the happiness of his children—who was thoroughly contented to see them marry after their own hearts. And yet as he stood there on the altar steps giving his daughter to that new son, and looking first at his girl, and then at his married son, he was reminding himself of all he had suffered.

After the breakfast—which was by no means a grand repast, and at which the cake did not look so like an ill-soldered silver castle as that other construction had done—the happy couple were sent away in a modest chariot to the railway-station, and not above half-a-dozen slippers were thrown after them. There were enough for luck—or perhaps there might have been luck even without them, for the wife thoroughly respected her husband, as did the husband his wife. Mrs. Finn, when she was alone with Phineas, said a word or two about Tregear. "When she first told me of her engagement I did not think it possible that she should marry him. But after he had been with me I felt sure that he would succeed."

"Well, sir," said Silverbridge to the duke when they were out together in the park that afternoon, "what do you think about him?"

"I think he is a manly young man."

"He certainly is that. And then he knows things and understands them. It was never a surprise to me that Mary should have been so fond of him."

"I do not know that one ought to be surprised at anything. Perhaps what surprised me most was that he should have looked so high. There seemed to be so little to justify it. But now I will accept that as courage what I before regarded as arrogance."

NOAH'S ARK BY NIGHT.

LONDON, like Paris and other great cities, has at night queer sights and sounds. The chimes at midnight and during the small

hours ring to many strange tunes. London has its jingle-jangle of carriages and cabs from opera, theatre, or junketing; the slow murmur of waggon wheels bringing cabbages to market; the chatter of the keeper of a coffee-stall; the heavy tread of the policeman; the quicker step of the lamplighter fulfilling the opposite duty to that indicated by his name. As the morning wears on a few tired men emerge from Fleet Street and the Strand hoping to catch a passing cab, and hailing desperately hansom or "growler," anxious only to get home. The sounds of revelry die swiftly out of all but the most fashionable squares and streets, and the rattle of the fishmonger's cart is perhaps the latest of nocturnal sounds. Towards Regent's Park, however, there are animal voices—those of the aristocracy of the cat family—the great carnivora whose habit, like that of the smaller felines, is to borrow a few hours from the night. Now and then their wild roar breaks the stillness of the night, but for the most part they are quiet enough.

It is a curious party to-night at the members' entrance of the "Zoo." Among those assembled is the eminent medical authority who wrote the depressing book instructing the reader that the bite of the full-grown, healthy (why insist on the health of such a brute) cobra di capello is absolutely fatal; provided always that the bite is the first after a sufficient interval of repose, that the puncture draws blood, and that poison is properly injected into the wound. And this is the cheerful companion the forethought of the Society has provided me with for a stroll round the snake-houses at night, when the vile inmates are on the alert and only too ready to inject my veins with poison. As I see the great snake experimentalist loom through the dim light, I see also gay toilettes of Zoological ladies—eager, not I hope to see the snakes fed, but to note the queer humours of a nocturnal visit to Noah's Ark, the curious assemblage of strange creatures brought together in one of the pleasantest spots in London. There are ladies and children and scientific as well as unscientific men in the Rembrandtesque picture, or series of pictures, presented as we start on our tour through the Ark. It has not been thought well that the great cats should be stirred up with the long pole, for there is a belief, more or less well founded, that those typical beasts of prey would dash themselves to pieces against the bars of their dens. As a professional

sceptic in all but serious matters, I doubt that they would be fools enough to do anything of the kind. Your beast of prey is usually of a wary nature, and fully competent to take care of himself. I am, by hard fortune, indifferently well acquainted with predatory animals of various kinds, and fancy I know something of his ways. I have met the "tiger" in the gilded saloons of the Frascati and Blanc of the New World. I have breakfasted with pickpockets or "guns," and I have dined with burglars. I know also but too well the tiger-cats who run upon two legs and mew to the tune of sixty per cent. or "six-to-four." Was not I security for Percy Nightshade just before he vanished, as the newspapers phrased it, "suddenly from the world of politics and society," and does not the Princess Digitaliski owe me a small fortune in gloves?

Our first visit was to one of the strangest of those creatures whose existence by daylight is necessarily a matter of pure faith. There is some tramping to and fro, much swinging of lanterns and many Rembrandt effects, before we reach the house of the rare bird known as the apteryx. What terrible wreck this visit has made of our illusions! All but the ultra-scientific, who knew all about it before they came, are disappointed. I have lived through a chequered half century—in which the black chequers by the way have been quite out of proportion to the white ones—happy in the belief that the apteryx was next of kin to the dodo, and I therefore looked for a bird of swelling port, so majestic that it could hardly move; in short, like the picture of the dodo in that interesting if inaccurate account over which I had pored when a child. But my imagination proved to be very far afield. There was a mighty scuffling between the keepers and a heap of straw, and then came to the lamplight very reluctantly two of the deceptive birds who cannot fly, whose feathers are like hair, and who keep up a kind of fiction that they are youthful, half-fledged innocents till the day of their death. The apteryx is curiously fearful of the light, and taken at its best is but a rat-like, bat-like creature, remarkable mainly for laying an egg nearly as big as itself. It has none of the grandeur of the real or fabulous dodo. Was the dodo after all a real bird, or was its portly form the fancy of some Dutch limner? That it was not identical with the apteryx is abundantly clear, for the queer New Zealand creature is less

like to the dodo than to that terror of spelling-bees, the *ornithorhyncus paradoxus*, who is supposed not to have quite made up its mind whether to become a duck, or a rat; a layer of eggs, or a devourer of the same. Why is not there a specimen of this queer duck-billed rat? Is the creature like Burgundy, difficult to carry, or is it as apocryphal as Barnum's mermaid, or that woolly horse whose left legs had grown shorter than the right through living on a hill always "this side up?" As we pass through the gloom, the lantern light playing queer tricks with the foliage, towards the reptile-house, strange thoughts flit through my brain. In my mind's eye I behold creatures stranger than the dodo and his poor relation the apteryx. Paleontologists have much to answer for. Comfortable scepticism had knocked dragons and griffins, vampires and krakens, on the head. They were buried among the dead-and-gone fictions; vanished with the supposed bravery of the lion, and the equally imaginary stupidity of the donkey. Then came paleontology and said: "If there are no dragons now, they abounded in olden times. Look at the creature called scientifically a pterodactyle, the flying lizard of awful mien. What is he, pray, but the dreadful original of the heraldic animals emblazoned on azure, gules, vert and sable?" When I was at school it was customary to induce small boys to go on the first of April to ask for "pickled eels' feet" as an impossibility. Now there are snakes with feet, and the learned say they were lizards once, and that the line of distinction between the lacertilia and ophidia is so very narrow that it cannot be drawn at feet, valid or merely rudimentary. I have just seen, by way of a whet for a reptile banquet, a lizard or a snake with feet so far apart as to be useless to the animal; and marvel greatly at the strange creatures perpetually turning up, as if Nature were never tired of producing new forms and modifying old ones.

At last we reach the reptile-house, never entered by me without suggesting a comparison between it and the cupboard of a friend of mine in the City. My friend's ordinary wares are such useful simples as vanilla, and saffron, senna and colchicum; but he has a terrible cupboard kept under severest lock and key. Neither tobacco, nor nuxvomica, neither opium, bitter almonds, nor fox-glove leaves, litter this lurking-place of death. Nothing so bulky could be admitted; there is in fact very little to be seen but a

row of bottles filled with, for the most part, colourless crystals. These are called by my scientific friend alkaloids, the essential principle of herbs, fruit, and drugs potent in medicine. Side by side stand flasks far more deadly than Woolwich infants and six-shooters, for they are loaded and primed with nicotine, brucine, morphine, strychnine, and digitaline, deadliest of vegetable poisons, leaving no trace save in the symptoms endured by their victims. A wilderness of cobras would not kill like these terrible alkaloids, but it is nevertheless eerie work pottering about in the dark among boxes full of serpents. And how lively they are at night! The constrictors, heavy and dull by day, are on the alert. Their great shining bodies are moving slowly, as if conscious of an enormous reserve of power. Quite as wide awake are the smaller serpents with flat venomous heads and wicked eyes. Loathsome beasts are those rattlesnakes, and Indian vipers of exceeding deadliness; and there would be a rare scamper off into space if we did not believe in the virtue of plate-glass to resist the most violent colubrine struggles. All at once a loud hiss sounds through the darkness, the hiss of a serpent who is in earnest, whose fangs would not miss their deadliness for want of venom—Virgil's serpent "nourished with poisonous herbs." Virgil is wrong, of course. Venomous serpents do not acquire their poison by eating poisonous herbs; but much must be allowed to poets. The hiss is startling enough; the more so because it seems to come from the ground. The whole of my epidermis is instantly converted to the condition known as "goosey." A cold shudder runs down my spine, and the surface of my body becomes icy. Presently I am reassured, as the lantern of the keeper, reveals the cause of my dismay. Not in one of the strongly-closed cages but in a smaller box on the ground is a dreadful object. At least it appears dreadful in the uncertain light. A hideous creature, with throat and wings banded with steel, is rearing his horrid head and protruding his tongue as he hisses furiously. It is the cobra di capello in the act to strike. As seen by night the hood or distended throat of the serpent is wonderful in its metallic lustre. The head itself, an incarnation of spiteful intensity, looks, as it were, over the top of this extraordinary throat, and appears, in consequence of the contrast, ridiculously small. How furious the brute is, and what

short work he would make of one, if not of more, of us!

There is another serpentine monster on the opposite side. This is the famous cannibal snake, the snake-eater—*Ophiophagus elaps*. This dreaded serpent, who is a larger kind of cobra, and at least as venomous as his better-known congener, actually performs the deeds told of him. He does not display his armed neck, glittering with a marvellous gorget, like the cobra, but is apparently in a good temper. The reason of this is soon disclosed. The cannibal serpent is about to be fed, and follows every movement of the keeper with keen avidity. The quiet man who knows the snake world, and whom the snakes know perfectly well, presently produces an unhappy serpent of the harmless kind common in our hedges, and throws it quickly down through a glass trap on to the floor of the cannibal. In an instant the intruder is smitten. Like a flash of lightning the fangs of the greatest of all venomous serpents plunge into his brain. When snake meets snake the head is always the part aimed at, as with fighting-cocks and fighting-dogs, and it may be added snake-eating birds. There are extant various woodcuts and other works of art representing a kite towering with a serpent in her beak, the reptile in the meantime sticking his fangs into the bird just under the wing. This is nonsense, like most "fancy" natural history. Birds who eat snakes always begin by driving their beak through the snake's brain. Before he can erect his head to strike, the beak descends upon him, as anybody can observe on seeing one of the hornbills—not nocturnal—fed at his regular hours. And the bird begins to eat at the head, as does the mungoose and the rat, for that matter, when he gets a chance. Everybody has heard the story of the rat who was put into a boa constrictor's cage to supply food for the monster. The snake proved sluggish, and the rat feeling hungry and finding he was not to be eaten, fell to on his own account, and ate up the snake from the nape of the neck downwards, most probably having bitten the reptile through the head to begin with. Pigs are said to put their feet on the snake's neck, as old country-folk do a forked stick, and then eat him up unconcernedly, but "verily I have not seen this." Snakes are by turns sleepy and voracious. I have seen two Dalmatian snakes begin to eat the same mouse, one at each end of the little creature, and meet in the middle to have a merry fight over it.

Ophiophagus has no sooner killed his prey than he begins to swallow it head foremost, but inasmuch as this sight is hardly pretty and amusing, we make off to pay a visit to the kangaroos.

It is strange that the kangaroos, who look pleasant and homelike enough by daylight, should wear a totally different aspect at night. In the light of a lantern they look like the ghosts of their midday selves, and the mysterious pocket with which they are endowed seems rather a receptacle for stolen goods than a cradle for kangarookins. There is a furtive look about the animals at night, which makes me think that they have picked up the manners and customs of the eminent bush-rangers with whom they must have associated. Doubtless if their pockets were emptied even more serious evidence than spoons would be discovered. I dare swear that great grey old beast has concealed about her the regular housebreaking implements—the short crowbar, the tiny lantern, the rope-ladder, and the tell-tale gimlet and wooden wedges.

Past the kangaroos we go into a little house, very hot and stuffy, to see some sloths, who seem quite tired out with the labour of sleeping all day. They have almost as easy a time of it, those unlovely creatures, as Boileau's "gros chanoine," who passed "*la nuit à bien dormir, le jour à ne rien faire.*" But, alas! there is compensation in all things, and, as Mr. Gilbert says, "taking one consideration with another," the lot of the sloth can hardly be a happy one. It must be at least monotonous to be always falling asleep in a tree-top, and waking up just in time to catch hold and prevent oneself from falling. It would be exciting for the first day or two, but assuredly wearisome in the long run.

The great ant-eater is a comparatively lively animal, and if it were not for his clumsy habit of walking on his knuckles would be charming enough. His long delicate snout excites wonder that no wilder beast has bitten it off, until one looks at the ant-eater's great powerful claws. These tremendous weapons are useful to the animal for tearing down the solidly cemented ant-hills which contain his prey, and would tear any beast of his own size to pieces with the greatest ease. Equally frisky with the ant-eater is the ocelot, that prettiest of tiny leopards, with its graceful and caressing little ways. It purrs delightfully, this spotted creature with the satin coat; but its powerful limbs mark the

distinction between it and the "harmless necessary cat." It is a wild beast, accustomed to get its own living by "wily turns and desperate bounds," and for all its pretty coaxing ways is not of the exact breed of wild cats of which I would elect to "whip my weight." Sweet engaging little creatures are the phalangers, soft and gentle, and by no means evil-doers although they hate the light. Still they do not inspire envy. A nocturnal existence up a tree is not a thing to dream of. If there were really anything in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, I would not hope to be a phalanger, any more than, being subject to sore throat, I would elect to be a giraffe. The life of a hippopotamus, or better still of a rhinoceros, appears to be far more dignified.

The creatures on whom a nocturnal visitor to the "Zoo" would most naturally rely are the owls. Unhappily, the owls in the Regent's Park are, to put it mildly, a failure. Beautiful and sagacious, the owl resents confinement, and from the height of her sublime wisdom looks down pityingly on her captors. Shooting out at nightfall from lofty belfry or deserted tower the owl is a delightful object. Her cry is a pleasant change from the queer note of the corn-crake, and her peculiar flight is not to be mistaken. But the owl in captivity at the "Zoo" is dull and uninteresting. It is not so with a tame owl, carefully kept and tended at home. There is no more delightful companion than a great horned owl, like that which rejoiced the heart of Mr. Browning a few years since. Yet the owls at the "Zoo" winked and blinked at us, and in plain English would have nothing to say to the nocturnal visitor.

Another stroll in the dark, and then I became conscious of four eyes looking out of the gloom. Not ordinary eyes, by any means, but great circular fulvous eyes, beautiful exceedingly, without a single flash of vice in them; delicious eyes, mild, deep, penetrating, and gentle. One more flash of the lantern, and four tassel-like ears became visible, and presently I made out sitting among the branches of a tree a brace of lynxes. Whether the wonderful eyes can see through a nine-inch wall I will not pretend to decide. All I can affirm is that their beauty by night is almost indescribable. The lynx is not only one of the most beautiful of the cat tribe, but is endowed with affectionate impulses from which the majority of the genus appear to be free. There

are many pleasant stories of lynxes, notably one told by Busbec, or Busbequius, as he Latinised himself. Among the menagerie which he kept during his residence as Austrian ambassador at Constantinople was a lynx, who loved one of his servants so that she refused to eat except in his presence, and on his being sent on a far journey, starved literally to death. The lynxes at Regent's Park have very good reputations, and, as their faces peer curiously out of the dark, are quaint beasts and pleasant to look upon. Another queer creature is the penguin, who, luckier than the great auk, has her haunts out of the track of merchant ships, and is not for some time to come likely to be exterminated and have her eggs sold at a hundred guineas apiece. Droller even than the penguin are the lemurs, the nocturnal tree-dwellers of Madagascar, who peer curiously at the band of visitors invading the monkey-house. There is some little fun among the frightened apes, and the pretty green monkeys rush about excitedly. Then we emerge once more into the open, and after a short walk in the dark find ourselves on the high road or outer circle of Regent's Park.

JANE HEARN'S TRIAL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

WHEN Guy Challoner had finished reading through the letter in a silence broken only by Mrs. Daubeney's stifled sobs, he laid it down upon the table, and turning to the window, stood there silent and motionless.

He was in truth, as the colonel had said but a few moments back, a brave man. He had encountered storms, in which each moment death seemed to stare himself and his companions in the face, without for one moment losing that calm repressed manner that was his most marked characteristic, but the mental storm of feeling that now shook him was harder to face than those perils upon the great waters.

The poor old colonel—who stood holding on to the edge of the mantel-shelf with one hand, as if glad of the support of something solid amid the bewildering and uncertain state of things in general—heard the sound of one deep-drawn breath after another—the sound as of a swimmer, sorely pressed, battling against a mighty current. "God bless my soul!" he cried at last, appalled at Guy's long silence. "Jane will be here before we know where we are if we don't look out. Guy, my dear fellow, my dear boy, what the devil are we to do?"

What were they to do?

This man—Jane's husband—had conceived the happy idea of leading everyone belonging to him to suppose he was dead, while he was in fact living under a false name in various cities in America; and then, after long years, writing to announce the fact of his existence, and of his intended return to England. He was good enough to be jocular over the whole affair: hoped "little Janey" had "not got married again;" said he could not help laughing when he thought of what an "astonisher" his letter would be to them all; and that he would like to see Jane's face when Colonel Daubeney "broke the news to her."

"It's likely enough I shall break something more than the news in telling Janey this," groaned the colonel; "what about the poor child's heart?"

Guy had still kept silence—still kept his face turned away from the two who watched him so intently, but now he crossed the room to the colonel's side.

Mrs. Daubeney uttered a low cry at the sight of the change that a struggle, short and sharp, had wrought in Guy Challoner. The man who had come into that pretty cheery room less than half an hour ago, with joyous gladness in his voice and look, seemed to have grown old all at once. His cheek was pale; his mouth, set in a resolute line of pain and endurance, looked as if never again could it soften with a smile; his eyes—Well, after meeting them for one moment Mrs. Daubeney covered her own.

"You are right," said Guy, speaking almost sternly in his determination not to yield an inch to the agony of heart that he knew, if once given way to even for a moment, would sweep all before it like an irresistible torrent. "You are right, Colonel Daubeney; we must think of Jane—of her only—and of nothing else as yet. She is somewhere up the shore you said, I think? I will go and meet her."

In a moment Mrs. Daubeney was clinging to his arm, sobbing, trying to speak; appealing to her husband—saying she knew not what.

Guy put his arm firmly about her shoulders.

"Try and trust me," he said with quiet earnestness; "no one—no one must tell Jane of this but me."

"It will kill her!" cried Mrs. Daubeney, wringing her hands.

Here the colonel, nerved by Guy's example, rallied his forces and came to the rescue.

"My dear," he said, "Guy knows best. Ellen, dear wife, let him go."

Mrs. Daubeney's arms dropped to her sides, and her husband led her to the sofa. For a lifetime she had been guided by his wise and loving counsel; she could not contend against his will now.

Guy had reached the door, when, suddenly, and as if struck with a new idea, the colonel called him back.

The delay tried him almost beyond endurance, yet he stopped.

"What is it?" he said, panting a little, in spite of all his powers of self-control.

"I say, look here, you know; don't let us make things blacker than they are. This fellow Hearn—he—there's no reason to suppose he's been leading the life of a saint in those parts; mayn't Janey be able to get rid of him; eh! don't you see?"

"Yes; I see," said Guy steadily; "but that would be no good. In Jane's eyes nothing but death can dissolve marriage, and I think the same. This man who has made her life in the past so wretched must stand between her and me for ever—as long as he lives. My God!" he broke out wildly, losing his calmness for one mad moment; "do you not think I see and feel the horror of it all? My darling—oh, my darling! which of us can comfort you?"

Listening to this burst of anguish, the colonel felt sadly that he had spoken unadvisedly; that he had far better have left well alone.

"If I find it necessary—I may do so—not to return here," said Guy, recovering himself, "will you send my traps down to the station, and tell your man to give them in charge to the station-master?"

The colonel nodded. He dared not give that tongue of his a chance of doing more mischief.

Another moment, and Guy was out in the calm, beautiful eventide. The gloaming was gently stealing over the world like sleep over a tired child. The shadows were purple on the sea; here and there a star shone faintly overhead; the brown dead bracken, drooping against the rocks along the shore, was mirrored in the quiet water that washed their feet. Birds sang, but softly, as though the hush of the coming night was over them, and the lazy wafting of a sea-gull's wings now and again shone white between sea and sky.

A peaceful brooding spirit seemed abroad. The summer was past, but a harvest of content had been garnered in, and autumn

was fair with a calm and mature beauty all its own.

But of its sweet ripeness of perfection the man hurrying on with eager strained eyes and pale set lips wotted nothing. The rocks dappled all gold and ruddy-brown with the dying ferns; the lovely purple shadows sleeping on the sea; the waft of white wings; the faint star-shine above, the gently sobbing water below; what were they all to him? Eager, mad, craving for the sight of a woman's face (ay, though it might be the last time he should ever gaze upon it, he still longed for the sight of it); agonising, quick-coming questionings as to how best he might spare his love all possible pain in the telling of the terrible story; such were the thoughts that surged like the waves of a troubled sea in Guy Challoner's mind. For him all the beauty of earth and sea and sky around him might as well have been but desolation, storm, and tempest.

Jane did not expect him—he had thought to come upon her as a sweet surprise. All the way on his journey down from London his mind had been full of anticipations of what her joy would be in his unlooked-for coming. That last letter of hers, so full of all womanly tenderness, of passionate devotion, of perfect comprehension of his aims and ends in life, his love and his ambitions, was still in the breast-pocket of his coat. It seemed like carrying some murdered thing about with him.

What would Jane say when she saw him? How should he meet her; how should he greet her—his lost love—his darling—torn from his side by a cruel fate? In time to come, no doubt hot indignation against Walter Hearn would take possession of Guy's soul. At present there seemed no room in his heart save for thoughts of Jane—room for nothing beyond unutterable pity and tenderness towards Jane.

At last, just at a turn of the shore he came in sight of her. She was coming slowly homewards, a few yellow fern-fronds and a scarlet bunch of orchid-fruit in her hands. Catching sight of Guy, Jane let ferns and berries fall to the ground as she ran to meet her lover. How often, how often in the weary days to come did Guy Challoner think of his lost love as he saw her then!—her dust-coloured dress blown back; the slight graceful form running on to meet him; the outstretched hands; the eyes at once soft and eager; the red

lips parted, and the gentle breast panting a little, for she had run quickly along the sands, wondering, as she ran, at Guy having come before his time.

The shore was a quiet, lonely place; indeed, there was absolutely no one to see what went on except the lazy sea-gulls floating in the offing, and a robin singing sadly, as it is his wont to do at eventide, in a bush hard by.

So Guy caught his love in his arms, and their lips met in a long, long kiss.

But Jane felt a strange thrill of fear even in that happy moment of greeting.

The lips that pressed hers so madly were cold and trembling; Guy was deadly pale, too, and his eyes had a look in them that she had never seen there before.

"What is it?" she said, the soft rosy colour dying from her cheek as she clung to his arm; and she looked up into his face with eyes full of fear.

Then, as he did not speak, only catching her hand in his and holding it tight against his breast, she added:

"Have they ordered you away at once? Oh, Guy, tell me, are you going to leave me before we are married? are you going at once—to-morrow; perhaps to-night?"

"Are you going to leave me?" His heart echoed the pitiful question; a question to which he might well have answered: "Ay, my love, for ever and for aye."

That was what he thought. What he said was this:

"There are no new orders, dear. I found I could get off a day sooner than I expected, and so I came; that is all."

"All?" she said wistfully.

He could not meet her gaze. He felt as if he were stifling, though the breeze blew softly in from the sea and the freshness of an autumn evening was in the air.

"Isn't this the path that leads into the pine-wood—our favourite walk?" he said presently.

And Jane answered "Yes."

She was awed by the sure intuition of some coming evil; she felt like a child whom someone was leading into a dark room full of mysterious horrors. Guy had some dreadful thing to tell her; of that she was sure. Well, she was no coward, and would show him how brave she could be. Linked hand in hand the two followed the pathway that led into the woods that were now grey and ghostly with the gathering shadows.

Robin sang no more. A thousand stars

in place of one here and there shone overhead ; the sea sobbed against the rocks more loudly, for the wind was rising as the night fell.

Colonel Daubeney, looking like a silhouette against the dusky sky, paced restlessly up and down, up and down, the garden.

If those two for whom he watched and waited had not been Guy Challoner and Jane Hearn, he might have thought that passion and despair had won the day, and that never more should he see his ward's sweet face or listen to her gentle voice. As things were, the colonel knew that though the parting between the one-time lovers might be as the very blackness and bitterness of death itself, Guy would strengthen the woman he loved to do the right, and shrink from the thought of seeing her fair white life sullied, even for his own sake, as from the touch of a red-hot iron. He trusted Guy utterly ; but this waiting tried him sorely. How would Jane look when she came back from that fateful walk along the shore ? What should he do to try and comfort her ? Would Guy come with her or would she come alone, widowed and desolate indeed, even though still a wife ?

Just before she went out she had been singing ; should he ever hear her sing again ? What was to be done about Walter Hearn ? Doubtless he could oblige Jane to go back to him ; and then there was her income—the residue of the fortune that had been so miserably squandered ; yes, that would be a temptation to the man, no doubt. How the colonel wished that Walter Hearn were one of those men, actively cruel, repellent, gross, from whom the law can easily protect any woman ! As it was, there was no law against a man slowly breaking his wife's heart by neglect and indifference ; no law against a man treating his wife with rather less consideration than he would an article of furniture in his household ; nor yet, if a woman were fool enough to leave her worldly possessions unguarded, could a man be prosecuted for making away with them.

No ; there was no appeal against Walter Hearn—none—unless he had led a dissolute life under cover of a false name and false position. Granted this, what end was to be gained by dragging Jane's name before the public, and giving that unrighteous critic the chance of saying that there had been "faults on both sides, no doubt !" Even when a woman's woman-

hood would be dragged through the mire by staying with a man whose only pleasure is to degrade her, there are still found cruel and unrighteous ones who will say that, be things how they may, her place is by her husband's side, while hands are not wanting to cast a stone at her bowed head. What chance, then, was there for Jane, who had no blackened bruises to show, but only a bleeding heart ?

"Perhaps the blackguard may not want her back," thought the colonel, trying to cheer himself up a bit ; "perhaps he might be willing to accept a—a—consideration to leave her alone."

Jane, for ever separated from Guy Challoner ; Jane, weary-hearted and sad-eyed ; Jane, never singing about the house as she used to do ; but yet Jane safe under his own roof, watched over, loved, comforted perhaps a little in God's own good time, by himself and that dear wife of his—these were the visions that the old man was conjuring up as he paced to and fro in the gathering darkness. But the visions quickly fled at last, chased away into the land of dreams by a pitiable reality. A solitary figure came slowly towards him through the gloom.

Jane, her clasped hands falling against her dress, the ghastly whiteness of her face showing strangely in the faint grey light that still lingered.

"Where is—where is——" stammered the colonel, losing his head completely, and wishing Ellen were near to help him in his sore extremity.

"Guy !" said Jane, completing his sentence for him. "I left him in the wood, the wood above the shore where we have had so many walks and talks together. I went because he told me it was best so. I looked back and saw him lying on the ground. I was glad I could not see his face. If he had looked up, I might have gone back, and then I should never have left him any more. Guy will not come here again ; he is going away to-night ; we have said good-bye to each other, you know. It will be a long good-bye, guardy—a long, long good-bye."

If she had wept, if she had sobbed her heart out over this sorrow that had come upon her, the colonel thought he could have borne it better ; but those dim, lacklustre eyes, those pallid lips that spoke so calmly, and in such strange, dreamy fashion, of this terrible parting in the woods !

"Come in, my dear, come in," he said, trembling.

Jane smiled. "Great Heaven!" he thought; "what a smile." And putting her hand in his she let him lead her in as he might have led a little child.

Jane's eyes were dry: they had the dull and vacant look you may see in those of a sleep-walker. Her brain was numbed, dazed by excess of misery; she only knew that she and her dear love had given each other a kiss-good-bye, and that it was for a long, long time.

STORY OF A WHIRLWIND.

THE account of a tornado, which recently visited several states on either side of the river Mississippi, in the United States of America, brought to my mind the scene of devastation wrought by one of these mighty phenomena of Nature, of which I was a witness, some years ago, in the interior of European Russia.

There seems to be a certain amount of confusion in the designation of wind-storms, as we now and again see them described as whirlwinds or tornadoes; as hurricanes or cyclones; and these four terms are frequently used indiscriminately, so that it is difficult to understand, without minute description, the actual nature of the phenomenon.

I am not sufficiently acquainted with such matters to give a definition of the four terms I have quoted, but it seems to me that the word "hurricane" applies to ordinary wind-storms spread over a more or less considerable area of space, but of immense power and speed; and perhaps to the "cyclone" also, moving over considerable space with a rotatory motion; whereas the "whirlwind" or "tornado"—or at least such an one as I will endeavour to describe—occupies a very limited area in its destructive course.

These tempests in the United States are described as being from a few feet to several hundred yards in diameter, and as travelling at the rate of from fifteen to fifty miles an hour. They appear to have their rise in the vast plains at the foot of the Rocky Mountain chain, and scarcely a year passes without one or more of greater or less violence occurring. That recently recorded is said to have commenced in the south-western corner of the State of Missouri, and thence to have traversed portions of the states of Kansas and Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, and to have been about half a mile wide.

These tempests often, I think, reach Canada, for I have seen there on several occasions an open track of perhaps a quarter of a mile in width through the uncleared forest, the vast trees torn up and broken, and lying about in desolate confusion. That is called in those parts a "windfall."

We have some little idea what a gale of wind is like when we hear it on a winter's night as it roars and shrieks round the house, and after seeming to be lulled to repose, or to die away in the distance, comes on again with a rush which almost makes us expect momentarily that the windows must be blown in, or the chimneys come crashing through the roof. We may also form, perhaps, some idea of its force from such a deplorable incident as that which occurred at the close of last year, when the central portion of the Tay Bridge was blown down; but of the power of wind such as these tropical tempests indicate we have no idea in England, for they seldom, perhaps never, occur. The last recorded in England, which was said to equal the rage of a tropical hurricane, was the great tempest of November 26 and 27, 1703, and this appears to have equalled in its destructive effects anything that has been since recorded in any part of the world. This was clearly a continuous storm, from its occupying two days, and must therefore have resembled the severest gale with which we are acquainted, frightfully intensified; for it is said that whole fleets were cast away and mansions blown down, and that London and Bristol had the appearance of cities just sacked. This differs entirely from the description of storm which has recently wrecked a number of little towns and villages in the new and partially settled states of Western America; for that dealt its deadly blow instantly, and passed on, scattering death and destruction in its path. The description says it "appeared as a black cloud, funnel-shaped, and lined with fleecy white, turning like a screw-propeller with immense velocity, and destroying everything in its path;" again that "horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, and dogs were whirled aloft, and flung lifeless upon the ground many yards away;" and that in its course at least one hundred and fifty human beings perished, and that hundreds more were injured, many of whom would certainly die from its effects. Now this terrible calamity is clearly caused by that description of tempest which has a rotatory or revolving motion, and whose

force is confined almost entirely to the comparatively narrow path on which it travels, and whose approach is sudden and unexpected, leaving no sign in Nature of its terrible passage, save only its deadly effects. Such was the phenomenon—I call it “whirlwind”—which I will endeavour to describe.

The occurrence, as I have said, took place in the interior of Russia, in the government of Kalouga, about a hundred miles to the south of Moscow. I was residing there at the time with my wife and children, being connected with two very large paper mills, which, originally established on a small scale by two Russian nobles whose several estates were in the neighbourhood, had been purchased by an English friend of mine, and not only erected on a large scale, but furnished, by degrees, with all the best machinery that England could produce. It was a charming neighbourhood for Russia, which generally presents a flat and uninteresting landscape, rendered less picturesque by the absence of any hedge or other break in the open and rather monotonous expanse. A river of some hundred yards in width approached from the south, and ran a sinuous course between banks, now low and flat, now gradually rising to a considerable elevation for that level land, and again in other places steep and precipitous, in a direction from west to east. On one side of the river, on the top of the rising ground, stood a large and handsome house with extensive gardens reaching to its banks, its square court-yard with the range of stables and carriage houses in the rear; and below, on flat low ground, on the other side of the river, stood a large and well-built factory of considerable extent. Not far from this again was a large peasant village, with some nice houses here and there on higher ground for those connected with the factory. Lower down the river, or towards the east, distant, perhaps, in a direct line not very much over a mile, but considerably further by devious road or winding river, in a still more attractive spot, was another factory, approached through a splendid old avenue of silvery birch. Here the river ran between banks gradually rising on either side, and was spanned by a bridge formed of mighty pine trees transversely crossed by stout timbers, which formed the roadway. Against this bridge were lodged the posts, which, resting in a place prepared for them in the bed of the river, so as to be easily released

from their places when the mighty spring flood and rush of ice came down, formed the dam which supplied the factory-race with water. On the northern bank, by the river's side, was the factory; at least so much of it as could be placed there, and the rest came a little way up and on either side of a road which wound down from the before-mentioned avenue to the bridge; while on the higher ground were two good houses with pretty gardens in front of them, used as residences by those who had the charge of the factory. Between these two houses was an open space of about fifty yards wide, in the centre of which, and on the highest ground, was a lofty post on which hung a bell used to summon the people to their work, and at the back of this ground were outbuildings and coach-houses and stables. On the other side of the river was a long straggling village street going up the ascent, with the thatched cottages of the peasantry on either side; and at the rear of the village, stretching on either hand for half a mile or more, and extending for a mile to the south, was a splendid forest of lordly pines.

I have been somewhat minute in my description of the locality, chiefly to make my narrative more clear, but also a little out of love for a place where I spent many pleasant years, and which was really possessed of many natural beauties. It was a glorious sight on a summer morning, when taking breakfast in the ample balcony attached to one of the houses on the top of the rising ground, to look over that broad valley with the whitewashed walls of the factory buildings and their green-painted iron roofs; in the bottom the lofty chimney, with its column of wood smoke, rising high into the clear, pure, cloudless atmosphere; the peasant-workers, in their picturesque costume, enlivening their labour now and then by a wild, melancholy, monotonous song, which, mingled with the busy hum of machinery, sounded well in the distance; a glimpse now and then of some of the winding reaches of the river as they shimmered in the golden sun, and, at the back of all, the dark, cool, splendid forest sending us its healthy perfume on the gentle gale. Our glorious forest of pine! How can I pass on without just speaking of its cool bosky depths, where the carpet of moss was so thick and soft, and where the wild strawberries grew in such profusion, and the cranberries, and many another wild but luscious fruit; and then the mushrooms, twenty sorts at least, of

which that only which we eat in England is the one despised. Oh, those wild strawberries and those mushrooms! Shall I ever forget their delicious flavour! And is that all? Nay, such a wealth of wild flowers as those old woods produced I never saw elsewhere. Alas! I am no botanist, and cannot describe them. I know we had violets and lilies of the valley by basketfuls; but of the orchids and hundreds of lovely flowers which clothed the woods in infinite variety and rich profusion I know nothing but that I enjoyed their beauty and their apparently endless succession from early spring until the gloomy days of autumn.

The occurrence which I have referred to as a mighty whirlwind passed through the scene I have just portrayed on the 23rd of July, 1863. The season which begins about the middle of May—that is to say, when the frost and snow and ice of winter have entirely disappeared, and when the sun has acquired such power as to make the weather hot and linen clothes instead of furs agreeable—had been peculiarly unusual and unsettled. We had experienced for some time very unseasonable weather. Heavy and very frequent rain with cold winds, and an almost constant recurrence of thunderstorms following the short intermissions of sunshine and genial weather. Now this is a very unusual state of things in that part of the world during the summer season. It is true that storms are far from being uncommon, and that they are generally severe while they last. They are usually preceded by a disturbance in the atmosphere—a rush of wind, with a greatly reduced temperature, accompanied by clouds of dust, speedily followed by a few large drops of rain; and with very little delay follow the thunder, the lightning, and the rain—the latter a deluge; flash upon flash of lightning of awful brilliancy; the wind adding its effects to the general strife, and the thunder clouds exploding with such frightful detonations as seem to shake the solid ground. Such a hurly-burly, indeed, does a severe summer storm produce in the middle of Russia that when it lasts long human nerves seem hardly equal to the strain; but except for these storms, when once the summer has fairly set in, the weather is beautiful for weeks together; a pure, clear atmosphere, dry and pleasant; the sun shining through a cloudless sky, and often with such tremendous power that the parched earth seems glowing under it.

On the day in question the morning was

gloomy until towards mid-day, when the sun shone through a kind of haze and the heat became intense. Nature appeared prostrated; not a tree gave sign of motion; not a leaf stirred. The people and the animals went about their work in silent, apathetic listlessness; and this continued through the afternoon until towards five o'clock.

That day the proprietor of the factories had returned from Moscow, arriving about noon, and bringing with him an English clergyman who in his summer tour had come to Moscow, and now had accepted the offer of seeing something of the interior of the country, and at the same time baptising a little son of mine, for which I had especially desired his presence. We three dined together at the large house on the hill, which I first described, and then the proprietor got into his carriage to go to the other factory, while the clergyman and I went to my house to attend a religious service for which I had arranged. During the progress of this service I noticed an extraordinary gloom, approaching to darkness, which so disturbed me that as soon as the service was concluded I left the house. I found the people gathered in knots, all surprised and half-alarmed at the unusual appearance of the sky, which was now overcast in the extreme and boded a more than usually terrific storm. I had hardly rejoined my clerical guest when a tremendous storm of hail came on, the stones that fell being of such a size as speedily to drive everyone under cover. All sorts of sizes were reported to me, from hen's eggs downwards, but certainly I saw plenty as large as pigeon's eggs. In a short time this passed away, and gradually the gloom dispersed, and, while congratulating ourselves that the storm had taken some other direction, the clergyman and myself went out to look about us. I was about to show him the factory when I saw the proprietor's carriage coming along the road, the horses at a gallop, and, as they came on nearer, covered with dust and foam. My first impression was that the coachman was drunk, no uncommon occurrence, and that the horses, frightened by the hailstones, had become unmanageable, and a carriage accident had occurred. When, however, the man approached me he pulled up, and though dreadfully excited, told me intelligibly enough that an awful occurrence had destroyed the other factory, and that all the people were dead or dying. I am happy to say that this last part of his

statement was a natural exaggeration, the result of scare, but enough remained of truth to be sufficiently terrible. I immediately got into the carriage, which had been sent for me, and we returned to the scene of action at the same headlong pace. Little was there on the road to give any suspicion of what had lately passed; the sun shone brightly, and all Nature looked at peace. As I came down the avenue of birch I noticed here and there a bough torn off and many hanging broken, but when I reached its end such a sight broke on my view as I never wish to see again. Ruin before and around me; ruin on all sides; buildings roofless and without windows; buildings again fallen flat, like houses built with cards; chimneys gone; palings nowhere; open spaces indistinguishable; and the whole area strewn thickly with a confused mass of heterogeneous wreckage. My first duty was to the proprietor, who had summoned me, as he had been very seriously injured and believed himself unable to recover. I then visited the cottages of those most severely hurt, and after sending off expresses for surgical assistance, had a little leisure to survey the scene, and also to collect reports of the nature of the catastrophe which had produced such dire results.

From the several descriptions of a considerable number of people, I was able to deduce that, when first observed, the storm appeared like distant smoke, and it was supposed that, as is often the case during the dry period of summer, some village had taken fire. Of course they were ignorant of its nature in the immediate neighbourhood of the factory, as they were on low ground, and it approached from the other side of the pine-forest, which was consequently between them. Several persons on high ground watched it passing over the level plain for several minutes in a direct line, and all concurred in describing it as a huge revolving column, of a somewhat conical shape.

Those about the factory, seeing only at a distance this curious column resembling smoke, had no notion of its real character until it entered the pine-forest; when the mighty boughs of the trees were seen sucked up into its vortex, and tossed high into the air, with leaves and twigs, and clouds of dust and rubbish, and accompanied with an appalling noise of crashing timber.

The storm-wind cut its road clean through the forest; and along its whole length, and for a width of about a quarter of a mile, the trees were torn up and smashed, and tossed

about like nine-pins, leaving, in the whole of that space, not a stick standing.

After passing through the forest the storm-wind seemed to bound up for a moment, as if freed from the resistance of the wood, for it passed lightly over the long street of the peasant village, only removing the thatch, which it sucked up on high, but doing no other damage. Its fury, however, was to be spent on the factory; first it demolished the bridge, leaving nothing but the four main timbers which crossed the stream, and then seemed to spend its force on the main chimney, which it was said to have lifted nearly a yard from its base. Now this chimney was a new one; it had not been completed, and the scaffolding removed, more than a month; it was large, constructed to meet the increased wants of the factory, and about one hundred and forty feet high. It stood, with buildings all round it, in a space not exceeding fifty feet square, and, incredible as it may seem, the whole material of which the chimney was composed fell perpendicularly, in a vast heap, within that space; another smaller chimney at some distance fell, as did also some of the buildings, while from others, as I have said, the roofs were stripped, and the windows entirely destroyed. The iron from the roofs, and some of the lighter portions of the buildings that fell, together with a good portion of their contents, were borne away on the wings of that wind, and disappeared altogether; indeed, the air was described as darkened with the mass of flying wreckage, which, though irregular in form and size, resembled a flock of rooks when congregating at evening before their flight home; and some of the lighter materials, such as window-frames, roofing, rags, and paper, were found as far from the scene of ruin as forty miles. The whole of this frightful scene was accompanied with a roar and noise wholly indescribable. After exerting its strength on the large chimney of the factory, and demolishing the buildings as described, the storm-wind ascended the rising ground towards the two houses I have mentioned. The one on the left, or nearest to the avenue, it scarcely touched, but it went through the other; palings, trees, roof, windows, all went, and the furniture was smashed to atoms. The post on which the bell hung, which was planed pretty smooth and painted, tapering from eight or nine inches at the ground to five at the top, was, by the resistless power of this whirling wind, drawn up like a cork out of a bottle, and flung, unbroken, on the

earth. I measured it the next day, and found there had been thirty feet above the ground, and seven feet below, and the hole was clean and undisturbed.

My friend, the old clergyman, had found his way over somehow, without conductor or guide, and he visited many of the cottages, where, though they could not understand his words, they knew his motive, and they remembered his timely visit for many a long day.

Next to the wonderful and terrible performances of the storm, it was surprising how comparatively little injury to human life was sustained amidst such wholesale destruction; some three or four people were killed on the spot, and one or two died later; some few lost limbs, and many sustained severe injuries. This comparative immunity probably arose, at a factory crowded with hands, from the fact that most were under cover, and in the better class of buildings, and so protected by their stout walls and strong floors.

Of course the loss was tremendous, and the destructive work of those few moments took many months to repair; but the buildings were reconstructed, the roofs re-erected, new windows made, rubbish removed, and order restored; the chimney rose again from its base; and the bell, on its old post, again called the people to their labour; and all soon wore again its air of old, except the pine forest. Alas! that was cut in twain; and soon, year after year, further inroads were made upon it with axe and saw, until at last nothing now remains of that dear old forest which, when the whirlwind approached the factory, fell fighting, as its first defence.

Whence this whirlwind came, or whither it went, or how far, I was never able to learn with any accuracy, there being so little intercommunication in the interior of Russia; but it is probable that it may have had its rise in the plains at the foot of the Ural Mountains. Many reports were brought to me of people and animals taken up in the vortex, which I could well believe, some being killed, and some again let down without any material injury. It was also said, and with a good deal of reason, that the heavy hailstorm which accompanied the whirlwind in our neighbourhood was the frozen contents of a considerable pond of water at no great distance, which it sucked almost dry in its course.

It would appear from the manner in which the large factory chimney was destroyed, that the centre of the whirlwind must have exerted its full force upon

it, and the same remark would apply to the bell-post, and here the diameter of the storm-wind must have been comparatively small; because, although it gutted one of the houses adjacent to this bell-post, the other, on the other side of it, not above twenty-five yards distant, was scarcely touched. This I think indicated the direction of the whirl, the outer edge of which would perhaps spend its force wholly or chiefly in the direction of its progress.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXX. RANF'S NEW HOME.

THE charge that Ranf was about to be called upon to answer was one of serious import, and colour was given to it by the conduct of the hunchback himself.

Morality with the islanders was a religion, and those who violated its laws could scarcely ever hope to be forgiven. Being mortal, they were not without sin; and sin was punished without mercy. The uncompromising attitude of this simple people towards those among them who were guilty, harsh and uncharitable as it was in its individual aspect, had often, doubtless, a deterrent effect upon others whose footsteps were straying. In this respect, its application was productive of good; but erring souls were made to suffer most keenly, and led to believe that forgiveness was only to be obtained hereafter by a lifetime of expiation. "Forgiveness must come from above," said the islanders; "it is not ours to bestow." Vicarious atonement was unknown; such a doctrine would have been scouted. Each must account for his own. Crime and sin were followed by earthly punishment, which upon the Silver Isle generally assumed the shape of personal avoidance. The guilty one was cut off from companionship, and necessarily from sympathy. Those who from his birth had greeted him with affection now turned their faces from him. The friendly hand was withheld, the loving word was not spoken. If pity was felt, it was not expressed. He was not allowed to starve; he was simply made to feel that he had lost his place among his fellow-men. In such a land as the Silver Isle it was difficult to conceive a punishment more bitter.

It is often thus with the kindest hearts— hearts which throb and quiver at the lightest touch. Faith once broken can never be restored; an injustice inflicts a wound which can never be healed.

Some time after Ranf's discovery of gold in the caves of the Silver Isle a vessel named *The White Dove* anchored in the bay. Its device was a dove lying helpless within the talons of an eagle. The *White Dove* was loaded with ploughs and harrows and agricultural implements of superior make and construction, and when its captain was asked whether he came to trade, his answer was that his business concerned only one man on the Silver Isle—Ranf the deformed. It then transpired that the cargo was consigned to Ranf, between whom and the captain a long private interview took place. A canvas tent was hastily thrown up, and the cargo was landed and stored therein; a written notice affixed outside the tent proved to be an invitation to the islanders to inspect the cargo of *The White Dove*. All the latest improvements in agricultural science were there exemplified, and the islanders immediately recognised their value. "But of what use," they asked each other, "is such a cargo to Ranf? He has only himself to provide for, and he has hitherto shown no disposition to till the land." They were soon enlightened. Matthew Sylvester being employed as an intermediary, signified to the islanders that Ranf desired to express in a substantial manner his acknowledgment of the kindness of the inhabitants of the isle in permitting him to reside upon their soil and live his life among them unmolested. The cargo had been carefully selected to meet their requirements, and to assist them in their noble pursuit. It was theirs; Ranf wished them to accept it from him as a free gift.

They wondered at this, bearing in mind the scant good-will that existed between them. "The hunchback owes us nothing," they said, with a twinge of self-reproach; and they hesitated before accepting so valuable a gift. Here and there doubts were raised. The cargo was the most costly that had ever come to the Silver Isle; how had Ranf become possessed of it? Matthew Sylvester conveyed to them Ranf's explanation. He had long had at his disposal a store of wealth which had lain idly by, and he had lately come into possession of further treasure, of which he desired to make judicious use. The islanders suspected nothing; the wildest imaginings could scarcely have hit upon the truth, and the explanation was received in good faith. So much mystery surrounded Ranf that what would have been regarded in other men as fabulous was in him regarded

as credible and commonplace. Still they refused to accept the gift without rendering an equivalent for it. Then said Ranf, through his spokesman:

"Let it be so; it shall be a matter of bargain between us. What can they give me in exchange?"

He lacked neither food nor cattle. He hit upon the only equivalent he would accept.

"There is a piece of waste land," he said, still conveying his wishes by proxy, "uncultivated and unbuilt upon, which I would call my own."

The question was asked of him what he would do with this land.

"Dig a grave on it," he replied. "But no; I will do better than that."

The land he coveted was about twenty acres in extent, beautifully situated on the slope of a hill which dipped into a valley known as the Valley of Lilies. It was to some extent a fair exchange, although the balance of value still lay with the cargo, and the bargain was made, the more readily on the part of the islanders because, after the display of so gracious a spirit by Ranf, they were not unwilling that he should have an opportunity of showing that he was made of better stuff than they had given him credit for. One or two said:

"The hunchback is weary of the silent warfare that has existed between us. When he first came upon our isle a bad commencement was made. How many sweet nuts have rough shells! We may have been mistaken in Ranf. His nature may have more of good in it than we have been able to discern."

"Ah," said Ranf, with a bitter smile, upon hearing, second-hand, the expression of these sentiments, "they have truly been mistaken in me. They did not know I was one of those men who, being struck on one cheek, meekly hold out the other for a second blow. One would suppose it difficult to discover in this world who are the sinners and who the saints."

Without further parley, however, the transaction was completed. Deeds were drawn up and signed, and the land became Ranf's freehold.

It was not noticed at the time that it included the grave in which Bertha's child was buried.

Then the islanders became curious to learn to what use Ranf intended to turn his land. He did not leave them long in doubt. The *White Dove* took its departure, and after a reasonable interval returned with another cargo, consigned

also to Ranf, consisting of the choicest timber for building and decorative purposes. Up to this point Ranf had not been seen in the negotiations respecting the transfer of the freehold. He had been observed at nights walking over his land, examining it and measuring it, and apparently making himself thoroughly familiar with its formation and peculiarities; but he came and went in silence. He now made his appearance among the islanders.

Age had not improved him. His hump seemed to have grown larger, his body smaller; his face was more morose, his limbs more disproportioned, his manners more uncouth. A rough shell, indeed, giving no indication of hidden sweetness.

He came to make application for permission to hire a number of men to help him build a house upon his freehold. As this intention appeared to convey a desire for companionship, permission was readily given, and he at once made arrangements with the best workmen on the isle, selecting them with shrewd judgment, and engaging them by written bond for a certain fixed time. He paid them liberally in such articles of ornament and utility as they were anxious to possess. Some bargained for cattle and waggons; some for tools and implements; some for skins and silks and seed; some for books and scientific instruments. Thus Ranf became the means of introducing into the isle many curious and useful articles of which the islanders had heard but which they had never possessed. The White Dove brought all that was desired, and more; Ranf's orders were given in the most liberal spirit, and payment for labour was made with lavish, almost reckless generosity. In speaking of him afterwards the men who worked for him said they believed their most extravagant demands would have been complied with, so long as they obeyed the orders of their employer; they might have had tools of gold had they asked for them; but nevertheless there was scarcely one who did not regret that he had ever entered into service with the hunchback, and with singular unanimity they all declared that they would as soon work for the Evil One as again for such a man. Could they have quitted his service with honour they would have done so without hesitation; but he held them by bond, and the law was on his side. For this discontent Ranf was responsible. Everything seemed to be so devised as to bewilder the men: they were unceremoniously

taken from one piece of work which was growing beneath their hands (for they were faithful workers, and took delight in their work), and put on another; orders were given and as they were about to be executed were countermanded, out of sheer maliciousness it was contended; comrades were parted, and kept at a distance from one another; before a task was finished the men engaged on it were taken away, and others who were ignorant of the first design appointed to finish it; not only maliciousness, but jealousy, reigned. In all this confusion, in all these eccentricities, the hunchback was the moving spirit; never for a moment was he still; "He has quicksilver, not blood, in his veins," said the men; he was restless and irresistible, and seemed to possess the power of being in a dozen places at one time. Occasionally he said, "Well done;" but those to whom the praise was addressed did not receive it with pleasure; "It will be well done," said they, "when our time has expired." The conformation of the grounds around the building that was being erected was altered; hillocks were levelled, water-courses formed, a pretty stream was made to meander through the land; they recognised no system in the orders that were given. Here their judgment was at fault, being warped by prejudice, for in the midst of all this apparent bewilderment a fine design was being surely and systematically accomplished, and Ranf's project, well considered and matured, was being carried out exactly and to the minute as he intended. The workmen themselves, when it dawned upon their minds, ascribed it to magic, an idea which the more practical ones laughed at, without being able to account for the results accomplished. Gradually and surely the work progressed until it was in some part completed; and then it was seen that Ranf owned the most perfect and beautiful house in the Silver Isle. Its originality added to its beauty. If it was Ranf's desire to invest it with a mystery which rendered it impossible for any of the workmen to give a faithful description of it, he achieved his wish, for none could correctly describe its interior. One said it contained so many rooms; another said so many; not two accounts agreed. The grounds around the house were laid out with exquisite taste, and rare shrubs and flowers were imported to beautify them; the marvel was that such a being as Ranf could have conceived and executed a plan so strangely beautiful. From all parts of

the isle men, women, and children came to admire, and many lingered in the hope of seeing some of the hidden wonders; but none were allowed to enter the building. Over the portico, on a slab of marble, was affixed, in letters of gold, fashioned by an artisan in the old world, the word "Chrysanthos."

"It is the name of the house," said the islanders, and asked each other the meaning of the strange word.

Ill-nature suggested that the word had an evil signification, but one more learned than the rest discovered that the word was Greek.

"And its meaning?" asked the ill-natured ones.

"The gold-flower."

This gave consistency to the device of the letters over the portico, each one of which was fashioned in the shape of a flower.

So much being done, something still remained which fanned into a fire the sentiment of repulsion for the hunchback by which the islanders were originally animated towards him. The house being built and the grounds laid out, it became necessary to hide them. By means of thick fences, close hedges, and trees, Ranf succeeded in shutting out both house and ground entirely from the view of passers-by. A proceeding so unusual excited something like anger in the breasts of the islanders. It was as though the hunchback had said: "There is nothing in common between us. You and I are apart from each other." In this sense they accepted it. He had thrown down, in a manner peculiarly offensive to them, a challenge, which they picked up. From that moment they looked upon Ranf with complete aversion and distrust.

He did not complain. He had never courted their favour, and he cared not that it was withheld from him. He had accomplished his wishes. In his beautiful house he was as completely cut off from his fellow beings, as he was in his huts on the mountain of snow.

A common roadway ran past the frontage of his freehold, and in Ranf's goings to and fro he was in the habit of meeting the islanders, who had used the path for generations. Between him and them no greeting was ever exchanged. Children stood aside to allow him to pass; women held their garments close to them, so that they should not come in contact with his. The familiar path ran parallel with the right bank of the Valley of Lilies, and so determined now were the islanders to avoid all association with the hunchback, that they cut another

path on the left bank. The old roadway immediately fell into disuse. "Avoid it," was the tacit and universal resolve. No surer sign could have been given of the deep antagonism which existed between Ranf and the inhabitants of the Silver Isle. After all these years, he was more than ever an alien from the sympathies of his fellows.

But, with a soul that loved beauty, that worshipped it silently in every form, Ranf turned this circumstance to advantage. He clothed the old roadway with wild flowers, and Nature, benign and beneficent, gracious to one and all alike, was soon seen here in her most beautiful aspect. Ranf's freehold literally lay embosomed in a bed of brightest form and colour.

The only human beings who still held to Ranf were Evangeline, Bertha, and the Sylvesters. It was singular that neither Evangeline nor any member of the Sylvester family had been asked by Ranf to visit his new possession. Bertha was the only person permitted to enter and roam about at will, and out of this circumstance had grown the trouble which now hung over the hunchback's head.

There were some on the isle to whose minds, in their strong dislike of him, Ranf was a nettle. "It reflects shame upon us," they thought, "that such a man should be allowed to live among us. Some evil will fall upon the land if we do not rid ourselves of him." But this could not be accomplished by any action of theirs. Ranf had now as strong a claim to residence as themselves. He had purchased land of them, and it was his for ever. The more they thought of this, the more it galled them; the sharper grew the nettle's point. Their only chance of ridding themselves of his hateful presence lay in the hope that some discovery might be made respecting him which would compel him voluntarily to quit the isle.

They questioned the captain of The White Dove.

"How is it," they asked, "that your ship is engaged only in carrying out the wishes of the hunchback?"

For at no time had the captain of The White Dove endeavoured to trade on his own account with the islanders. Its visits were regular, and it never came without bringing a number of packages and cases for Ranf.

"It is easily answered," said the captain. "The hunchback is the owner of my ship."

"Is he a master it is creditable to serve?"

"Decidedly he is. I know nothing against him. Hark ye, masters. It would be well if there were more in the world like him."

"You would fill the earth with deformity," they exclaimed, in wonder.

"There is another kind of deformity," retorted the captain of The White Dove, "than deformity of the body. The mind gets twisted sometimes, as yours seems to have got."

"Have you a daughter?"

"Three."

"Would you allow such a man to marry a child of yours?"

"Heaven forbid! But that does not prevent me from pitying him for his misfortune, nor from doing justice to him. Take a lesson from my book, masters. You are no more perfect than other men."

"You are warm in your defence. What binds you so closely to the hunchback?"

"First, self-interest. Second, he is good to the poor."

"In what way?"

"In this. There is never a day upon which I bid farewell that he does not place in my hand a packet of gold, saying, 'Use this for the unfortunate;' and would you believe—no, perhaps you would not—that he never asks for an account? Are my reasons sufficient?"

"Yes," they answered; and were inclined to waver; but only for a short time. Their prejudice against Ranf was too strong to be blown away by the words of a man who confessed he served his master from motives of self-interest.

The captain of The White Dove reported this conversation to Ranf. The hunchback smiled.

"They are right in their way," he said, "and I in mine; but all roads are not alike. One day it may be otherwise between them and me."

Thus matters went on until within a few weeks of Mauvain's return to the Silver Isle.

At this time a circumstance was brought to the knowledge of the islanders which caused them to assemble and determine upon a course of action with respect to the hunchback.

Not even to the Sylvesters was it known that Bertha was free of the hunchback's house, and was in the habit of visiting it. The discovery was led up to by a curious-monger who had long been tormented by a desire to obtain a glimpse of the mysterious residence. He selected a dark night for his purpose, and as he was reconnoitring, endeavouring to find a means of ingress to the grounds, he was startled by the appearance of a woman evidently familiar with the place. He followed her stealthily, and made his way into the garden. The

windows of the house were lighted up, and after a little while he saw a shadow not to be mistaken—the shadow of Ranf. Carefully concealing himself, he waited and watched, and presently his patience was rewarded by the appearance of Ranf and the woman he had followed at one of the windows.

Here, in truth, was a strange discovery. The intruder was a young man, unacquainted with Bertha, and could not see the woman's face, but the circumstance of any woman being seen in such a place was sufficient to disturb him. It was a matter that should not be kept secret, and he resolved to make it known on the following day. He did not intend, however, to depart from the grounds without making an endeavour to see something of them. He moved about cautiously, and coming suddenly upon a marble statue, which for a moment he believed to be a spectre, he uttered a loud cry of alarm. It was heard within the house, and the next moment Ranf, accompanied by Bertha, came from the house to ascertain the cause of the alarm. The man, fearful for his life, crouched and held his breath, and by good fortune escaped detection. Ranf held in his hand a lighted torch, which he raised above his head; he walked in almost every direction but the one in which the intruder lay concealed; Bertha kept close to the hunchback's side.

"I see nothing," said Ranf; "but the voice I heard was human."

"There are spirits," whispered Bertha.

"They do not speak," said Ranf. "You seem afraid."

"I am frightened of shadows."

"We will go in, then. Do not tremble; there is nothing to fear." And together they re-entered the house.

The man breathed more freely, and the fear of detection gone, he determined not to depart until he had to some extent satisfied his curiosity. It was not possible to obtain a satisfactory view until there was a light in the sky; he would wait; the moon would rise in an hour.

Gradually the light crept over the grounds, and the man was filled with wonder at the beauty by which he was surrounded. The loveliest flowers were blooming, fountains were playing, and marble statues, partly concealed by the foliage, were strangely touched by the moon's light.

"No wonder I thought it was a living form," he muttered.

His idle curiosity grew into a fever. This foretaste of wonders filled him with a

burning desire for further discovery. He approached closer to the house, forgetting that the moon was full upon him. Suddenly the door opened, and Ranf appeared on the threshold. The man stood still as stone as the hunchback slowly approached him.

"Your business?" demanded the hunchback in a low tone.

The man was too terrified to reply.

"Your business?" cried Ranf again, and, no answer being given, stepped swiftly into the house, and reappeared, holding by the collar a dog quite three feet in height, and of a breed strange to the Silver Isle.

"I have but to move my finger," said Ranf, "and you would be torn to pieces. Answer quickly. Are you alone?"

"Yes."

"Your business, then?" for the third time demanded Ranf.

"I have none."

"What brought you here?"

"Curiosity."

"Is it satisfied?"

"Quite. Once I get safe out of this place, you may depend I shall never set foot in it again."

"I warn you to keep your word. I will show you an easy way out of my grounds. Walk before me."

The man was about to obey, when Ranf noticed a sudden light in his eyes, which were directed towards the portal. Turning, to ascertain what had caused this flash of newly-awakened intelligence, Ranf saw that Bertha was standing on the threshold. A peculiar smile crossed the hunchback's lips as he looked again at the intruder.

"How long have you been in my grounds?"

"For two or three hours."

"Ah! You were here before the moon rose, when I came out with a lighted touch in my hand?"

"I was."

"And the woman who stands there was by my side."

"Yes."

"How did you gain admittance here?"

"I followed the woman."

"It was a manly action. You seemed surprised to see her here."

"My looks express my thought."

"Perhaps you would like to speak to her."

"I have no wish."

"Were you sent here?"

"No."

"It was idle curiosity that brought you."

"Yes."

"You are singularly fascinated by the woman there. What attracts you in her?"

"She is dressed strangely."

"But with taste; admit that."

"If it pleases you to admit it, I do so."

"And having stolen here from idle curiosity, you have made a discovery."

"Yes."

"Does any person besides ourselves know of your intrusion here to-night?"

"No one."

The hunchback's eyes searched his soul. "You speak the truth. Do you not see the peril in which you stand? You have made a discovery which you intend to use to my prejudice. Do not attempt to deny it."

"I do not deny it; as for its being to your prejudice, that is as it may turn out."

"Exactly. But the jury are empannelled, the judge is sitting. It has been so for years. Nay, the very verdict—'Guilty!'—is on their tongue, no evidence being required. Of what good action could a hunchback be capable? You are in peril, I say."

"I am no longer afraid," said the man, who was not really a coward. "We are man and man."

"You do me the justice to believe that I would not use the strength of this animal against you? You are truly gracious. We are, as you say, man and man—and I thank you again for putting me on a level with yourself. But in the inference you draw, you would find yourself grievously in error. I have the strength of four such men as you. I could kill you where you stand, and none would be the wiser."

With a sudden movement, the hunchback clasped the man's body, so that he could not move a limb, and raised him high above his head; as suddenly he released the man, and set him safely down.

"I give you your life, without conditions. Use your discovery. Now, walk before me, without another word, and quit my place."

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ASPHODEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIXEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER I. "AND SHE WAS FAIR AS IS THE ROSE IN MAY."

"OH, you glorious old Sol, how I love you!" cried Daphne.

It was a day on which common mortals were almost fainting with the heat, puffing and blowing and complaining, a blazing midsummer day; and even here in the forest of Fontainebleau, where the mere idea of innumerable trees was suggestive of shadow and coolness, the heat was barely supportable—a heavy slumberous heat, loud with the hum of millions of insects, perfumed with the breath of a thousand pines.

Daphne revelled in the fierce sunshine—she threw back her crest of waving hair, bright as yellow gold, she smiled up at the cloudless blue, she looked unwinkingly even at Sol himself, the mighty unquenchable king of the sky, glorious yonder in his highest heaven.

She was lying at full length on a moss-grown block of stone at the top of a hill which was one of the highest points in the forest, a hill-top overlooking on one side a fair sweep of champagne country, fertile valleys, church steeples, village roofs, vineyards and rose gardens, and winding streams; and on the other side, woodlands stretching away into infinite distance, darkly purple.

It was the choicest spot in a forest which, at its best, is a poor thing compared with the immemorial growth of an old English wood. Here there are no such oaks and beeches as our Hampshire forest

can show—no such lovely mystical glades—no such richness of undergrowth. Everything seems of yesterday; save here and there a tree that looks as if he had seen something of bygone generations, and here and there a wreck of an ancient oak, proudly labelled The Great Pharamond, or The Royal Charlemagne, with a placard hung round his poor old neck to say that he is not to be damaged, "on pain of amend." Such Pharamonds and Charlemagnes abound in the forest where Rufus was killed, and nobody heeds them. The owls build in them, the field-mice find shelter in them, the woodpecker taps at them, unscared by placards or the threat of an amend.

But in the Fontainebleau woods there are rocky glades which English forests cannot boast—wild walks between walls of gigantic granite boulders—queer shapes of monsters and animals in grey stone, which seem to leap out at one from the shadows as one passes; innumerable pine-trees; hills and hollows; pathways carpeted with red fir-needles, mosses, ferns, and wild flowers; and a bluer, brighter sky than the heaven which roofs an English landscape.

"Isn't this world better than Asnières?" asked Daphne of her companion; "and aren't you ever so grateful to those poor girls for getting scarlet-fever?"

Asnières was school and constraint, Fontainebleau was liberty: so if the forest had been a poorer place, Daphne, who hated all restraints, would have loved it.

"Poor girls!" sighed Martha Dibb, a stupid, honest-minded young person, whose father kept an Italian warehouse in New Oxford Street, and whose mother had been seized with the aspiration to have her

daughters finished at Continental schools; whereby one Miss Dibb was being half-starved upon sausage and cabbage at Hanover, while the other grew fat upon *croûte au pot* and bouillon in the neighbourhood of Paris, and was supposed to be acquiring the true Parisian accent. "Poor girls; it was very bad for them," sighed Martha.

"Yes; but it was very good for us," answered Daphne lightly; "and if it was a part of their destiny to have scarlet-fever, how very nice of them to have it in the term instead of in the holidays, when we shouldn't have profited by it."

"And how lucky that we had that good-natured Miss Toby sent with us instead of one of the French governesses."

"Lucky, indeed!" cried Daphne, with her bright laugh. "That good simple Toby, with whom we can do exactly what we like, and who is the image of quiet contentment so long as she has even the stupidest novel to read, and some acid-drops to suck. I tremble when I think of the amount of acid-drops she must consume in the course of a year."

"Why do you give her so many?" asked the practical Martha.

"They are my peace offerings when I have been especially troublesome," said Daphne, with the air of a sinner who gloried in her troublesomeness. "Poor dear old Toby; if I were to give her a block of sweetstuff as tall as King Cheops's pyramid, it wouldn't atone for the life I lead her."

"I hope she won't get into trouble with Madame for letting us run wild like this," suggested Miss Dibb doubtfully.

"How should Madame know anything about it, and do you think she would care a straw if she did?" retorted Daphne. "She will get paid exactly the same for us whether we are roaming at large in this lovely old forest, or grinding at grammar, and analysis, and Racine, and Lafontaine in the stuffy schoolroom at Asnières, where the train goes shrieking over the bridge every half-hour carrying happy people to Paris and gaiety, and theatres and operas, and all the good things of this life. What does Madame care, so long as we are out of mischief? and I don't see how we can get into any mischief here, unless that lovely green lizard we saw darting up the grey rock just now should turn into an adder and sting us to death."

"If Miss Toby hadn't had a headache we couldn't have come out without her," said Martha musingly.

"May Toby and her headache flourish! If she had been well enough to come with us we should have been crawling along the dusty white road at the edge of the forest, and should never have got here. Toby has corns. And now I am going to sketch," said Daphne in an authoritative tone. "You can do your crochet, for I really suppose now that to you and a certain class of intellects there is a kind of pleasure to be derived from poking an ivory hook into a loop of berlin wool and pulling it out again. But please sit so that I can't see your work, Dibb dear. The very look of that hot wool on this hot day almost suffocates me."

Daphne produced her drawing-block and opened her colour-box, and settled herself in a half-recumbent position on the great granite slab, and surveyed the wide landscape below her with that gaze of calm patronage which the amateur artist bestows on grand, illimitable, untranslatable Nature. She looked across the vast valley, with its silver streak of river and its distant spires, its ever varying lights and shadows—a scene at which Turner would have looked with awe and a sense of comparative impotence; but which ignorance, as personified by Daphne, surveyed complacently, wondering where she should begin.

"I think it will make a pretty picture," she said, "if I can succeed with it."

"Why don't you do a tree, or a cottage, or something, as the drawing-master said we ought to do—just one simple little thing that one could do correctly?" asked Martha, who was provokingly well furnished with the aggravating quality of common sense.

"Drawing-masters are such grovellers," said Daphne, dashing in a faint outline with her facile pencil. "I would rather go on making splendid failures all my life than creep along the dull path of mediocre merit by the lines and rules of a drawing-master. I have no doubt this is going to be a splendid failure, and I shall do a devil's dance upon it presently, as Müller used in the woods near Bristol, when he couldn't please himself. But it amuses one for the moment," concluded Daphne, with whom life was all in the present, and self the centre of the universe.

She splashed away at her sky with her biggest brush, sweeping across from left to right with a wash of cobalt, and then began to edge off the colour into ragged little clouds as the despised drawing-master had taught her. There wasn't a

cloud in the hot blue sky this midsummer afternoon, and Daphne's treatment was purely conventional.

And now she began her landscape, and tried with multitudinous dabs of grey, and green, and blue, Indian red, and Italian pink, ochre, and umber, and lake, and sienna, to imitate the glory of a fertile valley basking in the sun.

The colours were beginning to get into confusion. The foreground and the distance were all on one plane, and Daphne was on the point of flinging her block on the red sandy ground, and indulging in the luxury of a demon-dance upon her unsuccessful effort, when a voice behind her murmured quietly: "Give your background a wash of light grey, and fetch up your middle-distance with a little body colour."

"Thanks awfully," replied Daphne without looking round, and without the faintest indication of surprise. Painters in the forest were almost as common as gad-flies. They seemed indigenous to the soil. "Shall I make my pine-branches umber or Venetian red?"

"Neither," answered the unseen adviser. "Those tall pine-stems are madder-brown, except where the shadows tint them with purple."

"You are exceedingly kind," said Daphne, stifling a yawn, "but I don't think I'll go on with it. I am so obviously in a mess; I suppose nobody but a Turner ought to attempt such a valley as that."

"Perhaps not. Linnell or Vicat Cole might be able to give a faint idea of it."

"Linnell!" exclaimed Daphne. "I thought he painted nothing but wheat-fields, and that his only idea of Nature was a blaze of yellow."

"Have you seen many of his pictures?" "One. I was taken to the Academy last year."

"Were you very pleased with what you saw?"

"Delighted — with the gowns and bonnets. It was a Saturday afternoon in the height of the season, and I plead guilty to seeing very little of the pictures. There were always people in the way, and the people were ever so much more interesting than the paintings."

"What picture can compare with a well-made gown or the latest invention in bonnets?" exclaimed the unknown with good-humoured irony.

Daphne hacked the spoiled sheet off her block with a dainty little penknife, and looked at the daub longingly, wish-

ing that the stranger would depart and leave her free to execute a *pas seule* upon her abortive effort. But the stranger seemed to have no idea of departure. He had evidently settled himself behind her, on a camp-stool, or a rock, or some kind of seat; and he meant to stay.

She had not yet seen his face. She liked his voice, which was of the baritone order, full, and round, and grave, and his intonation was that of a man who had lived in what the world calls Society. It might not be the best possible intonation — since orators and great preachers and successful actors have another style — but it was the tone approved by the best people, and the only tone that Daphne liked.

"A drawing-master, no doubt," she thought, "whose manners have been formed in decent society."

She wiped her brushes and shut her colour-box with languid deliberation, not yet feeling curious enough to turn and inspect the stranger, although Martha Dibb was staring at him open-mouthed, as still as a stone, and the image of astonishment. Daphne augured from that gaping mouth of Martha's that the unknown must be somewhat eccentric in appearance or attire, and began to feel faintly inquisitive.

She rose from her recumbent attitude on the rock, drew herself as straight as an arrow, shook out her indigo-coloured serge petticoat, from beneath whose hem flashed a pair of scarlet stockings and neat buckled shoes, shook loose her mane of golden-bright hair, and looked deliberately round at Nature generally — the woods, the rocks, the brigand's cave yonder, and the stalls where toys and trifles in carved wood were set out to tempt the tourist — and finally at the stranger. He lounged at his ease on a neighbouring rock, looking up at her with a provokingly self-assured expression. Her supposition had been correct, she told herself. He evidently belonged to the artistic classes — a drawing-master, or a third-rate water-colour painter — a man whose little bits of landscape or foreign architecture would be hung near the floor and priced at a few guineas in the official list. He was a Bohemian to the tips of his nails. He wore an old velvetene coat — Daphne was not experienced enough to know that it had been cut by a genius among tailors — a shabby felt hat lay on the grass beside him; every one of his garments had seen good service, even to the boots, whose neat shape indicated a refinement that struggled against adverse circumstances. He was

young, tall, and slim, with long slender fingers, and hands that looked artistic without looking effeminate. He had dark brown hair cut close to a well-shaped head, a dark brown moustache shading a sensitive and somewhat melancholy mouth. His complexion was pale, inclining to sallowness, his nose well formed, his forehead broad and low, his eyes were of so peculiar a colour that Daphne was at first sorely perplexed as to whether they were brown or blue, and finally came to the conclusion that they were neither colour, but a variable greenish-grey. But whatever their hue she was fain to admit to herself that the eyes were handsome eyes—far too good for the man's position. Something of their beauty was doubtless owing to the thick dark lashes, the strongly marked brows. Just now the eyes, after a brief upward glance at Daphne, who fairly merited a longer regard, were fixed dreamily on the soft dreamlike landscape—the sun-steeped valley, the purple distance. It was a day for languorous dreaming; a day in which the world-worn soul might slip off the fetters of reality and roam at large in dreamland.

"Dibb," said Daphne, ever so slightly piqued at the unknown's absent air, "don't you think we ought to be going home? Poor dear Miss Toby will be anxious."

"Not before six o'clock," replied the matter-of-fact Martha. "You told her with your own lips that she wasn't to expect us before six. And what was the good of our carrying that heavy basket if we are not to eat our dinner here?"

"You have brought your dinner!" exclaimed the stranger, suddenly waking from his dream. "How very delightful. Let us improvise a picnic."

"The poor thing is hungry," thought Daphne, rather disappointed at what she considered a low trait in his character.

Martha, with her face addressed to Daphne, began to distort her countenance in the most frightful manner, mutely protesting against the impropriety of sharing their luncheon with an unknown wanderer. Daphne, who was as mischievous as Robin Goodfellow, and doated on everything that was wrong, laughed these dumb appeals to scorn.

"The poor thing shall be fed," she said to herself. "Perhaps he has hardly a penny in his pockets. It will be a pleasure to give him a good meal and send him on his way rejoicing. I shall feel as meritorious as the Good Samaritan."

"Is this the basket?" asked the painter, pouncing upon the beehive receptacle which Martha had been hugging for the last five minutes. "Do let me be useful. I have a genius for picnics."

"I never heard of such impertinence!" ejaculated Miss Dibb inwardly; and then she began to wonder whether the valuable watch and chain which her father had given her on her last birthday was safe in such company, or whether her earrings might not be suddenly wrenched out of her ears.

And there was that reckless Daphne, who had not the faintest notion of propriety, entering into the thing eagerly as a capital joke, and making herself as much at home with the nameless intruder as if she had known him all her life.

Miss Dibb had been Daphne's devoted slave for the last two years, had admired her and believed in her, and fetched and carried for her, and had been landed in all manner of scrapes and difficulties by her without a murmur; but she had never been so near revolt as at this moment, when her deep-rooted, thoroughly British sense of propriety was outraged as it had never in all Daphne's escapades been outraged before. A strange man, fairly well-mannered it is true, but shabbily clad, was to be allowed to hob and nob in a place of public resort with two of Madame Tolmache's young ladies.

Martha looked despairingly round, as if to see that help was nigh. They were not alone in the forest. This hill side at the top of the rocky walk was a favourite resort. There were stalls for toys and stalls for refreshments close at hand. There were half-a-dozen groups of idle people enjoying themselves under the tall pines and in the shadow of the big blue-grey rocks. The mother of one estimable family had taken off her boots and was lying at full length with her stockings exposed to the libertine gaze of passers-by. Some were eating, some were sleeping. Children with cropped heads, short petticoats, and a great deal of stocking, were flying gaudy-coloured air-balls, and screaming at each other as only French children can scream. There was not the stillness of a dense primeval wood, the awful solitude of the Great Dismal Swamp. The place was rather like a bit of Greenwich Park or Hampstead Heath on a comparatively quiet afternoon in the middle of the week.

Miss Dibb took heart of grace, and decided that her watch and earrings were

safe. It was only her character that was likely to suffer. Daphne was dancing about among the rocks all this time, spreading a damask napkin on a smooth slab of granite, and making the most of the dinner. Her red stockings flashed to and fro like fire-flies. She had a scarlet ribbon round her neck, and the dark serge gown was laced up the back with a scarlet cord, and, with her feathery hair flying loose and glittering in the sun, she was as bright a figure as ever lit up the foreground of a forest scene.

The unknown forgot to be useful, and sat on his granite bench lazily contemplating her as she completed her preparations.

"What an idle person you are!" she exclaimed, looking up from her task. "Tumbler!"

He explored the basket and produced the required article.

"Thanks. Corkscrew! Don't run away with the idea that you are going to have wine. The corkscrew is for our lemonade."

"You needn't put such a selfish emphasis on the possessive pronoun. I mean to have some of that lemonade."

Daphne surveyed the banquet critically with her head on one side. It was not a stupendous meal for two hungry school-girls and an unknown pedestrian, whom Daphne supposed to have been on short commons for the last week or two. There was half a wasted fowl—a fowl who in his zenith had no claim to be considered a fine specimen, and who seemed to have fallen upon evil days before he was sacrificed, so gaunt was his leg, so shrunken his wing; there were some thin slices of carmine ham, with a bread-crumby edge instead of fat. Of one thing there was abundance, and that was the staff of life. Two long brown loaves—the genuine pain bourgeois—suggested a homely kind of plenty. For dessert there was a basket of wood-strawberries, a thin slab of gruyère, and some small specimens of high-art confectionery, more attractive to the eye than the palate.

"Now, Dibb dear; grace, if you please," commanded Daphne, with a mischievous side-glance at the unknown.

That French grace of poor Martha's was a performance which always delighted Daphne, and she wanted the wayfarer to enjoy himself. The "ongs" and "dongs" were worth hearing.

Gravely the submissive Martha complied, and with solemn countenance asked a blessing on the meal.

"You can have all the fowl," said Daphne; "Martha and I like bread-and-cheese ever so much better."

She tore one of the big brown loaves in two, tossed one half to Martha, and broke a great knob off the other for her own eating, attacking it ravenously with her strong white teeth.

"You are more than good," replied the stranger with his pleasantly listless air, as if there were nothing in life worth being energetic about; "you are actually self-sacrificing. But, to tell you the honest truth, I have not the slightest appetite. I had my second breakfast at one o'clock, and I had much rather carve that elderly member of the feathered tribe for you than eat him. I wish he were better worthy of your consideration."

Daphne looked at him doubtfully, unconvinced.

"I know you're disparaging the bird out of kindness to us," she said; "you might just as well eat a good luncheon. Martha and I adore bread-and-cheese."

She emphasised this assertion with a stealthy frown at poor Miss Dibb, who saw her dinner thus coolly confiscated to a suspicious-looking interloper.

"You doat upon gruyère, don't you, Martha?" she demanded.

"I like it pretty well," answered Miss Dibb sulkily; "but I think the holes are the nicest part."

The stranger was cutting up the meagre fowl, giving the wing and breast to Daphne, the sinewy leg to Martha, who was the kind of girl to go through life getting the legs of fowls and the back seats in opera-boxes, and the worst partners at afternoon dances.

Finding the unknown inflexible, and being herself desperately hungry, Daphne ended by eating her share of the poultry, while her guest eat a few strawberries and munched a crust of bread, lying along the grass all the while, almost at her feet. It was a new experience, and the more horrified Martha looked the more Daphne enjoyed it.

What was life to her but the present hour, with its radiant sun and glad earth flushed with colour? The scent of the pines, the hum of the bees, the delight of the butterflies flashing across the blue. Utterly innocent in her utter ignorance of evil, she saw no snare in such simple joys, she had no premonition of danger. Her worst suspicion of the stranger was that he might be poor. That was the only

social crime whereof she knew. And the more convinced she felt of his poverty, the more determined she was to be civil to him.

He lay at her feet, on a carpet of fir-needles, looking up at her with an admiration almost as purely artistic as that which he had felt an hour ago for a green and purple lizard which he had caught asleep on one of the rocks, and which had darted up a sheer wall of granite, swift as a sun-ray, at the light touch of his fingertip. With a love of the beautiful almost as abstract as that which he had felt for the graceful curves and rainbow tints of the lizard, he lay and basked in the light of this school-girl's violet eyes, and watched the play of sunbeam and shadow on her golden hair. To him too the present hour was all in all—an hour of sunlight and perfume and balmy atmosphere, an hour's sweet idleness, empty of thought and care.

The face he looked at was not one of those perfect faces which would bear to be transixed in marble. It was a countenance whose chief beauty lay in colour and expression—a face full of variety; now whimsically gay, now pouting, now pert; anon suddenly pensive. Infinitely bewitching in some phases, it was infinitely provoking in others: but, under all conditions, it was a face full of interest.

The complexion was brilliant, the true English red and white; no ivory-pale beauty this, with the sickly life of Gibson's painted Venus, but the creamy fairness and the vivid rose of health, and youth, and happiness. The eyes were of darkest grey, that deep violet which, under thick dark lashes, looks black as night. The nose was short and retroussé, nothing to boast of in noses; the mouth was a trifle wide, but the lips were of loveliest form and richest carmine, the teeth flashing beneath them absolutely perfect. Above those violet eyes arched strongly-marked brows of darkest brown, contrasting curiously with the thick fringe of golden hair. Altogether the face was more original in its beauty than any which the stranger had looked upon for a long time.

"Have you any sketches to show us?" asked Daphne when she had finished her dinner.

"No; I have not been sketching this morning, and if I had done anything I doubt if it would have been worth looking at. You must not suppose I am a grand artist. But if you don't mind lending me your block and your colour-box for half an

hour I should like to make a little sketch now."

"Cool," thought Daphne. "But calm impudence is this gentleman's leading characteristic."

She handed him block and box with an amused smile.

"Are you going to paint the valley?" she asked.

"No; I leave that for a new Turner. I am only going to try my hand at a rock with a young lady sitting on it."

"I'm sure Martha won't mind being painted," replied Daphne, with a mischievous glance at Miss Dibb, who was sitting bolt upright on her particular block of granite, the image of stiffness and dumb disapproval. She was a thick-set girl with sandy hair and freckles, not bad-looking after her homely fashion, but utterly wanting in grace.

"I couldn't think of taking such a liberty with Miss Martha," returned the stranger; "the freemasonry of art puts me at my ease with you. Would you mind sitting quiet for half an hour or so. That semi-recumbent position will do beautifully."

He sketched in rock and figure as he spoke, with a free facile touch that showed a practised hand.

"I'm sure you can paint beautifully," said Daphne, watching his pencil as he sat a little way off, glancing up at her every now and then.

"Wait till you see how I shall interpret your lilies and roses. I ought to be as good a colourist as Rubens or John Phillip to do you justice."

She had fallen into a reposeful attitude after finishing her meal, her arms folded on the rock, her head resting on the folded arms, her eyes gazing sleepily at the sunlit valley in front of her, one little foot pendent from the edge of the greenish grey stone, the other tucked under her dark blue skirt, a mass of yellow tresses falling over one dark blue shoulder, and a scarlet ribbon fluttering on the other.

Martha Dibb looked more and more horrified. Could there be a lower deep than this? To sit for one's portrait to an unknown artist in a shabby coat. The man was unquestionably a vagabond, although he did not make havoc of his aspirates like poor dear papa; and Daphne was bringing disgrace on Madame Tolmache's whole establishment.

"Suppose I should meet him in Regent Street one day after I leave school, and he were to speak to me, what would mamma and Jane say?" thought Miss Dibb.

A QUEER DUKE.

THERE were heroic Dukes of Brunswick, whose career was chivalrous, with whom many have become acquainted through the indirect aid of Mr. Millais's well-known Black Brunswicker. But there was another who died recently, whose career was anything but chivalrous.

This strange being was the nephew of the unfortunate Queen Caroline, and of George IV., who became his guardian, and to whom he gave much trouble. He was driven from his duchy by the Revolution, and thenceforward making one of the band of the dethroned, set up in business after the Monte Christo fashion, being remarkable for diamonds, uniforms, Eastern dressing-gowns, and wigs of the most resplendent brown. For about five-and-twenty years Europe was to be entertained with his singular and eccentric proceedings. Being rejected by his own duchy, and considered flighty, if not of unsound mind, the duke took possession of the ducal property in the state, which gave occasion to constant appeals for justice to the British Parliament, the French Courts, and other tribunals, who all declined to interfere. In this country he seems to have incurred the dislike of the press generally, and was often engaged in actions for libel, when he made long rambling speeches to the juries, enumerating his wrongs. It is curious that the most general topic of ridicule should have been his wearing a beard.

Not many may have heard of the extraordinary bargain concluded between him and Louis Napoleon, then in Ham Prison, and his equally singular treaty concluded with our own Mr. Duncombe ("Tommy"), sometime member for Finsbury.

The strangest part of this history was the solemn treaty signed and sealed in Ham, by the "Prisoner" of that place, in which both parties solemnly swore on the Holy Gospels, that whichever first came to power should aid the other to recover his rights with arms and money. This arrangement was made in 1845, in presence of G. T. Smith, Mr. Duncombe's secretary. These two persons, indeed, now entered on a most extraordinary rôle, devoting themselves to the cause of this strange potentate, and in the year following secured a last will and testament, solemnly drawn up, in which "all and everything" was left to the member for Finsbury, and thirty thousand pounds to the worthy G. T. Smith. To the former, by way of whetting his appetite was given

a detailed list of the jewels and bonds, amounting to close on a million sterling in value. In March, 1848, the gems, bonds, &c., were actually entrusted to G. T. Smith. His account reads like a page of Dumas.

"On Saturday night I was occupied for five hours making a catalogue of the bonds, &c., now in my care. I have money to the amount of two hundred thousand pounds, and gems, &c., to the amount of ninety thousand pounds, and all was safe at my house this morning when I left, and I hope will be there when I return. Where the sixty thousand Louisiana are I know not—at least, I could not ask him too much, or he would have got frightened. I have only one saddle-bag, Number Four, and if your brother Henry will lend me his brougham to go in, I will show him all. Now, then, for your assistance. After he had decided what he would entrust me with, he started; in fact, he told me that before then his fear had been of my house being destroyed by fire, and the paper-money thereby lost. I, fearing to lose the opportunity, said I had got (which I have) an iron chest; but alas! mine is too small, and I am compelled to keep the saddle-bag in a cupboard—perfectly safe, except against fire. I want your permission to move your iron chest, till I deliver up the treasure again. My reason for making this curious request is this: he might perchance come to my house to look and see that it was all safely deposited in iron. I fear, on looking at your iron box, that I shall not be able to get the saddle-bag in, but I may the money, &c., by packing close. One thing is a fact; that I have in genuine good securities a tolerable good sum now in my house, and really if he would allow all the large loans (and which he does not for the present purpose think of changing) to be at my house it would be a grand thing for us at his death, and they would be just as safe as with him, for I would not touch one shilling until I felt I was entitled to it by his death. After all, he cannot be so suspicious as we fancy, else why should he trust me with so large a sum? I left his house at one o'clock after midnight, and was compelled to walk to Oxford Street before I could get a cab. When in the cab my fancy ran upon the excitement I should feel if the bags with the treasure had been with me in a cab under different circumstances, viz., the starting to join you. I cannot but think it a good omen that some of it should be with us, and it must, I am sure, please you to think that his confidence has not in the

least diminished. Pray don't forget to say whether I may use the iron box at my house; there is nothing in it but the will, and where so fit a place as that which contains the documentary powers of disposing of the money, for the money?"

The duke's proceedings in London were of the most singular kind. He lived at Brunswick House with an enormous establishment of servants and horses, where he affected to consider himself a sovereign prince and above the law. Judgment having been obtained against him for some debt which he refused to pay, the sheriff's officer obtained admission by a stratagem. An immense iron chest containing the duke's food being brought inside the gates with due precautions—for he affected to dread poisoning—the officers rushed in with it. The alarm was raised. The duke appeared with his pistols. Men and bloodhounds were set on the unfortunate officers, who were flung out with broken legs and other serious injuries. Yet he succeeded in obtaining one thousand pounds damages for violation of domicile.

Prince Louis Napoleon had now come to be President, but found difficulties in carrying out his part of the treaty. He, indeed, put off its execution until he should have full power in the state, but he never did anything serious to restore his friend. Meantime the duke was entrusting another secretary, Baron D'Andlau, with bags of money, who was posting to Paris with forty thousand pounds, to be invested there; for this shifting of his property from state to state was a mania of the duke's. He had also charge of large plaques of pure gold, into which form the duke had a fancy for converting his hoards.

Meanwhile, the position of the legatees, "Tommy" Duncombe, and G. T. Smith—"The Treasurer-General" as he is described—was becoming more and more precarious. His royal highness was flourishing; and though he once fell sick and was attended by the latter, the potentate, suspicious as he was, seems to have had perfect confidence in his English attendant. At one time he put twenty leeches on his head, and was about to put twenty more on. "Strange to say, he will not have a doctor, but trusts me—a very unpleasant responsibility." Later he wrote to his friend more hopeful news.

"I have taken an opinion with regard to D. B., and it is thought to be a breaking up of the constitution; they say, at his age, he runs great risk of a severe attack.

Last night the conversation between H. R. H. and self was the subject of the will; and he said to me: 'If anything happens to me during this illness, over and above what you have by the will, I give you fifty thousand Sardinians as a gift; and as there are one hundred and fifty-six thousand in the packet, it would be well to send Mr. D—— over the same amount, and place the remaining fifty thousand in some secure place, to pay your joint law expenses which you would incur in insisting upon the whole of my Brunswick property being placed at your disposal.' I then said (having a good opportunity): 'Are you quite sure that the will is in perfect order to satisfy the French law?' He said: 'I have always understood so.'

The contentions between these hopes and the sense of decent propriety is amusing enough. The situation was certainly a tantalising one, and would try the stoicism of a philosopher. The awkwardness, too, was that there could be no anticipating the inheritance, as all was precarious; and any eagerness even as to current expenses might overset all. For the duke was sensitive even to these, and would haggle over details.

"Thus, on our return we arranged that my-travelling accounts should be paid, as I was to quit the next day. Accordingly I made out my account, he deducting the carriage to Godstone, which he said he did not ask me to take, and then settled to the sous. He then hum'd and hah'd a good deal, and at last counted out ten sovereigns, which he handed over to me, saying, 'This will pay for your white gloves;' and he said, 'Allow me to seize this opportunity of telling you that I have long since felt that I have very inadequately remunerated you for many things you have done for me.' He then entered fully into the history of the visit to Ham; how many times he had seen you, &c.; what you had done for him, and finished by saying, 'As a collateral remuneration, I have made my will in your favour jointly with Mr. Duncombe, and should I have the strength to see you before I die, I will, independent of that will, make you a present worthy of your acceptance.'

In 1851 he left England suddenly for Paris, choosing as an eccentric mode of conveyance Mr. Green's balloon, the Nassau, in which he ascended from Vauxhall. He arrived in Paris with his enormous baggage, some chests of which were reasonably detained at the custom-house, owing to the

suspicious circumstance of their containing uniforms, which caused great excitement. After the coup d'état our duke established himself in the Champs Elysées, at Lola Montes's Hotel, which he gradually transformed into a sort of Eastern palace, full of extraordinary caprices and devices, out of the Arabian Nights. But under the blaze of gold and decorations which adorned his bedroom, everything was of iron, to guard against assassination—floor, ceiling, and door—so that it was in fact an iron cage in which this unhappy sultan lay down to rest. The various portions were entrusted to different sets of workmen, so that the whole combination was a secret. In the wall was contrived a recess, opened by a key which was always attached to his person, where was hung by chains an enormous coffer, which a touch allowed to sink into a deep well that reached far below the very foundations of the hotel. Here were stored his bonds, jewels, and golden tablets, some of which were cast in the shape of chocolate slabs. The whole house was as gorgeous as money and extravagance could make it. Forty horses were in the stables, and as many servants waited on him. The visitor, after innumerable precautions, was seated in a rich chair, which carried him aloft to the upper floors, which, in the days before "lifts" were familiar, was considered something out of the fairy tales. But the old idea of being poisoned clung to him, the very milk arriving from the country under locks and bolts. His regular dinner he partook of not at home, but at the cafés and restaurants.

At the theatres and on the boulevards for many years the spectacle of this strange duke became familiar. He was always carefully painted and bewigged for the day; and the story ran that he had a room full of waxen images of his own face, tinted in different fashions, according to which he would colour his own. A "Nubian slave" always attended him. One night, at a party given by Prince Jerome, the duke, impatient at not being able to get through the crowd of empire magnificoes who blocked the way, called out fiercely to his black: "Make a passage for me. Use your sword."

His grand passions were lawsuits and diamonds. He went to law with a washer-woman for a bill of seven francs. He went to law with his architects, upholsterers, gardeners. His rage for jewels was extraordinary, and when he appeared on some great gala, bearing all his treasures, he was a sight to see. He wore two epaulets of large

yellow diamonds, each worth forty thousand pounds, while his chest was encrusted with a dozen jewelled orders, from the Golden Fleece to the Lion and Sun.

But in 1864 this satrap was to receive a severe blow. His daughter had married against his wishes the Count de Civry, and had moreover changed her religion. With a strange rancour he refused to forgive, see, or support her, and after many ineffectual advances she had to appeal to the French courts. When he saw that in spite of all his protests a French court was going to entertain a question which referred to Brunswick, he suddenly broke up his vast establishment, and taking all his bonds, and selling his French stock, left nothing to be seized, and retired to The Hague, where he lived two years. Then growing weary of this banishment he returned to Paris, and under the advice of counsel invoked the French laws, which after a series of appeals were in his favour. The duke therefore triumphed, and was once more established at his Elysian Fields hotel.

But, alas! in the year 1861 a significant matter occurred which must have shaken Tommy Duncombe's hopes, if he had not resigned them altogether, or grown indifferent, for he was near his end, and was to die in that year. The secretary was sent for to Paris.

"His highness said: 'This is a bad day, 17th, and you have arrived twice lately on a 7.' I replied: 'I think, your royal highness, I was in the house before twelve o'clock last night. The valet said it was ten minutes past twelve. His royal highness then said: 'My reason for sending for you is, that I thought you would not care to run about Paris with the large sum of money you have, and although I am not ready to settle accounts with you' (he being in bed), 'you can seal up the packet, or how you like, and we will settle by-and-by. I have been thinking a great deal about my testament lately, and I intend to change it, as to its legality, and you must get my testament back from Mr. Duncombe.' I replied: 'Your royal highness, that requires an authority from your royal highness.' He then said, speaking in the plural: 'You would have less difficulty with a French will than with an English one here in France.' The conversation here ended, and I, having some important appointments, left his royal highness. I may safely say this is all that passed."

The next stage was a new testament.

This strange duke, it would seem, delighted with the favourable view taken of his case by the French tribunals, had determined to choose a Frenchman for his heir and selected the son of his old ally, the Emperor Napoleon; to whom, by a fresh "Act," he bequeathed all his immense possessions. But by-and-by came the crash of 1870. The duke had to fly from Paris, and established himself at Geneva, leaving his magnificent hotel to the besieged and to the invaders.

On the news of the general disasters he completely turned against his lately-named legatees, casting them and the French nation off altogether. On March 5 he destroyed his will, and prepared another. "We bequeath our fortune—that is to say, our castles, demesnes, forests, lands, mines, salt-works, hotels, houses, parks, libraries, gardens, quarries, diamonds, jewels, silver, pictures, horses, carriages, china, furniture, cash, bonds, stocks, notes, and especially that portion of our fortune of which we were stripped in 1830, with interest accruing, all to the Town of Geneva." He desired further that his body should be laid in a magnificent mausoleum, in a prominent position, surmounted by an equestrian statue of himself, with those of his father and grandfather, "an imitation of the Scaliger tomb" at Verona. The cost to be defrayed out of his "millions." The most famous artists were to be employed. Then were repeated the instructions of the first will: His body was to be petrified after the receipt attached; five doctors were to examine his body to see that he had not been poisoned. His funeral was to be conducted after the pattern of that of a sovereign prince.

But amid all these dispositions there was another he did not accurately make account of. He himself was to be disposed of. On the evening of August 18, 1873, he was playing chess, and rose to go to his room, leaving the game as it stood. "Don't rob me," were his words—and his last words. He was found dead in his room.

All his instructions were strictly followed, but the "petrification" process failed. The society of "Funeral Pumps" from Paris undertook it, bringing all their magnificent cars, &c. Then the city began to lay out the inheritance. The costly tomb is finished; so is a magnificent opera-house, costing together about half-a-million. The town rather handsomely allotted annuities to some of the faithful attendants

the duke had so selfishly passed over. To make the whole grotesque even to the end, the courts of Brunswick, now that the money is half spent, have decided that the will is void.

JANE HEARN'S TRIAL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

"LET it be as a dream that is past, and like a tale that is told—let it be as though it had never been."

Jane Hearn was going back into the old barren, arid life: the old life of ceaseless self-repression, of utter lack of sympathy, of cheerless days one following the other in an endless monotonous procession.

She was like one who, footsore and weary, had been led to the gates of a paradise of peace and rest, a beautiful land "flowing with milk and honey," and then dragged back into the sandy desert already traversed with sore pain and travail.

She had learnt what were the possibilities of life, and then been set face to face with its black realities.

Walter Hearn's last "whim" had been most successfully carried out. He had had his fling, and now, as he pleasantly put it, he was coming home again to settle down into an exemplary domestic character.

Jane knew full well what that meant. She knew the old routine off by heart—the utter disregard of everything and everybody save the whim of the hour; the utter indifference to his wife's happiness that had characterised his conduct from the early days of their married life; the cultivation of a kind of society utterly detestable to her; the spending of every possible farthing he could lay his hands upon, and, worst of all, the posing as a gentle-spirited victim to domestic worry—a great soul linked to a woman who neither understood nor appreciated him.

She knew what had been the galling of the chain that bound her life, and now had she not also tasted of the sweetness of liberty, and peace, and love? And now the old struggle must begin again, and the story of Guy's love, his tenderness, his ceaseless thought for her, all their happy companionship together, must be "as a dream that is past, and as a tale that is told." There were no half measures in Jane's creed. Believing herself free she had given herself up body, heart, and soul to the new life, the exquisite new life that had opened out before her. Her days, her nights, had been full

of thought and full of dreaming of Guy Challoner. She had searched her own mind to discover its fullest capabilities in the way of entering into those grand pursuits he loved. She did not want to try and turn herself into an aggressively learned woman; she only wanted to attain to the power of being receptive and appreciative, to be at once ambitious for him and proud of him, and to be both these things with understanding.

The old life of pain and struggle had once grown dim and misty; it had seemed a thing unreal, as though it were the story of some other woman that Jane had once read with a mighty pity stirring at her heart.

Now it was the new life, the new beautiful happy life that had opened like a flower-strewn vista before her, that must be set aside at the call of right and duty.

In Jane's eyes marriage was a holy thing, not a mere contract to be broken at will. If a woman for the sake of, and in defence of, the purity of her own womanhood had to leave her husband, then henceforth she must face the world alone. As long as the man to whom she had vowed to consecrate her life lived, no matter what his sins against her, no other man could be more to her than a true and loyal friend.

This was Jane's creed—an old-fashioned one, no doubt, as the world goes now, but sweet and pure as the scent of those old-fashioned garden flowers that are going out of favour nowadays too.

"I have done no wrong," she said, lifting her sad, tired eyes to the old colonel's face, and making him feel as if it would do him good to swear a good round oath at things in general and Walter Hearn and his whims in particular; "and Guy has done no wrong. We did not know, either of us. When we did we kissed each other many times, and said Good-bye."

The quiet, hopeless resignation of Jane's look and voice maddened the colonel. And yet there was nothing to be done—absolutely nothing.

Mrs. Daubeney was so frightened by Jane's stony calmness, dim eyes, and white weary face, that she hardly dared speak at all: which was perhaps a good thing, since there are times in life when even the gentlest words sear like hot irons, and such a time had come to Jane Hearn.

She made all her own plans; packed all her own things; went about the house quietly seeing to this or that—more able to think of what ought to be done than either her guardian or his sorrowing wife.

She had determined to go down to Southampton and meet her husband.

"I want to leave all the old life behind me," she said. "You will not see me for ever so long. Walter will not care to come, I know—you remember he never did. He will write to you, I daresay, and I shall write. You must not mind if I have not much to say about myself. I do not think there will be much to say."

"Won't you be very lonely in London, my dearie?" Mrs. Daubeney ventured to say, gently stroking Jane's hand—the hand whereon the wedding-ring glistened, and where once a single amethyst, Guy's gift, had shone with softest lustre. "London is a lonely place for anyone who has no friends."

"I shall not mind," said Jane. "I think I am a person who is better without friends—an unsympathetic sort of person, you know," she added, with a smile the sight of which sent poor Mrs. Daubeney out of the room.

The story of Guy's love for Jane Hearn, and hers for him—the story of those madly happy months by the western sea—was to be buried deep down beneath the earth of forgetfulness. Few people knew anything about it, and Jane was going away from all her late surroundings into a life and an atmosphere far removed from any of them.

She could nerve herself to kiss the dear dead face of her lost hope and calmly draw the covering shroud above it; but she could not bear to let others look upon it laid so low. It was lost, dead to her for ever, but sacred beyond all words—hers it was and Guy's. No one else had part or lot in it.

The colonel and his wife felt that it was best that Walter Hearn should never know of this one episode in Jane's life. Why should he, indeed? He had no right to such knowledge. He had acted a lie; he had been utterly unfaithful to the woman he had vowed to love and cherish.

In his heart the colonel girded terribly against this determination of Jane's—this going back to a miserable life, but he knew it was no use to protest. You cannot bring the law to bear upon a man because he blots out all the brightness from a woman's life and starves her heart. He may care not one jot or tittle though she weep herself blind, and yet the world sees no flaw in his conduct. He may see her sick and suffering, and show her less sympathy than he would give to a lame hunter in his stables or a sick hound in his kennels, and the world will only call the woman "exactng." The colonel knew that these things were so, and

felt his own helplessness to stand between Jane and coming trouble.

About a week before the date of Walter Hearn's expected arrival in England, the ship to which Guy Challoner was now attached sailed on that scientific quest which was absorbing the interest of nations. The colonel saw the notice of this and secreted the paper that contained it; but he subsequently wore such a guilty air that Jane suspected the truth.

"Do not keep anything from me," she said, coming up behind him and laying her arm about his neck; "it is no real kindness; tell me—is Guy gone?"

"Yes, yes, my dear; he sailed yesterday," stammered the troubled man. At the time Jane said nothing; she only shivered and crept up to the fire, leaning closely over it and holding out her hands to the blaze. Afterwards, Mrs. Daubeney, going softly to her room, opened the door stealthily to see Jane kneeling by the bed with her arms thrown up across the coverlet. No sobs shook the slight frame thus prostrate at the feet of God; better, indeed, if it had been so; better if tears had come as some relief to the bitter aching of the poor tortured heart.

A few days later Jane Hearn left that pleasant home beside the sea. No more should she watch the changing shadows come and go upon the bosom of the waters; no more should she watch the little boats with red sails set hie seawards bending to the wind; no more wander along the rocky shore or under the tall spires of the pinewood—that fateful wood where she had seen her lover lying prone upon the dark earth, his face hidden on his outstretched arms—the arms that might never more enfold her!

Jane was gone, and the house she had left seemed to the old colonel and his wife like a cage from which a sweet-voiced bird had flown, leaving it empty and desolate.

The winter was past, the spring was coming. The buds began to swell upon the branches of the trees in the London parks. Last year's leaves, lying brown and withered on the ground, were swept up into heaps, so that the young grass-shoots had a chance to peep up and try what they could do to make the waking world fair with a soft green carpet. But though these first signs of coming verdure were plentiful enough, it was what is called a "late spring;" and furious gales presently swept the sea and scoured the land, bending

down the trees and doing their best to shake the tiny buds off and scare the birds from their wooing. A shadow, too, a ghastly shadow of great dread, was over the land.

The ship that had sailed upon that momentous quest was missing. In vain was search made upon the broad wide sea for any traces of what had been so fair and brave a thing; eager watching, agonised listening for gleam of hope or sound of tidings, were alike in vain. Day by day were to be seen in the papers paragraphs headed, "The Missing Ship;" day by day hope pined and died; day by day the shadow on the land and in men's hearts deepened and grew.

One woman read those cheerless daily records dry-eyed. She went about her daily duties; she was gentle, uncomplaining, ready of eye and hand as ever; but Jane Hearn's heart was breaking within her—for that missing ship was Guy Challoner's.

She could not realise the idea of death coming in such swift and terrible form to him who seemed so strong, so brave, so full of all manly endurance.

Through all the trouble of the old life begun again; through this second cruel experience of neglect and selfish indifference; through strivings after better things—efforts, such as only a woman brave and true could be capable of, to draw her husband nearer to her, to win him closer to her side; the thought of Guy and of that short story of their loves and hopes in the summer that was gone had cheered and strengthened her.

The more worthy she could be, the more she could conquer herself, the higher the standard to which she could live, the more would she feel as if, in spite of all outward severance, in spite of all width of separation here on earth from the man she loved and revered, yet should she and Guy in heart and soul stand side by side, as those who strive together to "endure unto the end," living life patiently and bravely as Heaven had ordered it for them.

She had striven after this ideal, and to a certain extent she had not failed, for Walter Hearn admitted that his wife was "improved," and joked about that whim of his as a thing that had had good results and taught Jane many lessons of common sense. She was not always fretting herself over things nowadays, he said, but had learnt to take things quietly. Also she cared little for outward show, and spending little on herself left all the more for him, which was an added source of satisfaction

to him, though he had the grace to refrain from saying so openly. At all times the sources of Walter Hearn's income had been wrapped in mystery. The supply fluctuated too, like the waters of the Nile; now overflowing his coffers as the river its banks; again, showing nothing but a vast expanse of desolations. Since those years spent in America this intermittent character had become more marked.

Jane's income he kindly forestalled as a rule, and when he did leave her any residue of it took great credit to himself for so doing and made expansive reference to men who were "close in money matters to their wives." People (women mostly) said what a pity it was that Walter Hearn's wife dressed so shabbily (which was not true, for though simply, Jane was always daintily and neatly dressed). They also said it was no wonder he left her at home so much and preferred to be seen with more "stylish" women. The truth was that when he was going out anywhere, Jane's husband would say to her: "You can come with me if you like, but it will cost twice as much as my going alone," and there was an end of the matter.

Well, things had gone on in this sort of way, sometimes better, sometimes worse, always cheerless for the patient wife, and Jane thought she was getting used to it; getting less sensitive than of yore, pleasing her husband better, in that his indifference did not make her suffer and annoy him by evidence of the same, as it used to do.

Jane thought these things and was thankful for them, not knowing that the real truth lay in the fact that her physical powers were failing under a long-continued strain, and that she did not feel things as acutely as she once had done simply because the tired heart began to beat more feebly than of yore. What she mistook for patient resignation was in truth but a bodily lassitude that, if there had been any loving eye to watch her, would have told a sorry tale. And then, upon these worn-out nerves of hers came the ordeal of the waiting and watching for news of that missing ship.

While life lasts hope never quite dies. She had thought that in a time to come—a time still very far away, but somehow and somewhere—when they were very old, she and Guy might meet again, might be friends and companions, might perhaps speak together of the dear old times.

But now, as a two-edged sword, the thought that she might never see Guy again pierced her heart. When a vessel

is reported "missing," hope ever dies a lingering death. There always seems to be a chance, and the mind clings to that chance as a drowning man to a rope.

It was so in this case; the slow agony went on day after day, week after week. Once, as Jane was searching for the expected paragraph, a strange and wonderful sensation came over her, the letters danced and wavered a moment before her eyes, and then—yes, she was away on the shore near the dear old home, she carried a long tangle of sea-weed in her hand, and Guy was beside her. She heard the low murmur of the sea, felt the warmth of the sunshine, and the close clasp of her lover's hand on hers.

But just as Guy turned and looked upon her, just as she met the exquisite sudden sweetness of the smile that she had loved, the vision faded and she awoke to reality—a strange and commonplace reality too—for she was lying on her bedroom floor underneath the window with the paper crumpled in her hand. "I must have fainted," she said to herself, rising with some difficulty, and making her way to the bed. How weak she felt, lying there; and surely the rushing sound of the sea beating upon the shore was still in her ears!

Walter Hearn was going out for the day with some friends of his, a lady and her husband, people whom Jane disliked and thoroughly distrusted. He came noisily up the stairs with his great-coat on, flung the bedroom door open widely, and then stood still, staring with no particular sympathy, but a good deal of annoyance, at the prone figure on the bed.

"Why, Jane, here you are, are you? I've been hunting you all over the place."

Then, as he noticed the pale face and shadow-darkened eyes on the pillow: "What the devil's the matter with you? Belle Craven and her husband are here, and it looks deucedly uncivil, you know, for you not to show."

Jane dragged herself wearily from the bed; the room swam before her eyes, the rushing sound was still in her ears, but somehow, she hardly knew how, she got downstairs, and greeted the loud-voiced, over-dressed woman who was called "Belle," and the man, with dyed hair and lacquered moustache, who had the good luck to be her husband.

It was Mrs. Craven's habit to say that she and her husband "understood one another thoroughly," which was certainly true; since perhaps two more perfectly unscrupulous people never lived, and

each played into the hands of the other perfectly. Walter Hearn was a vain fool, and Mrs. Craven fooled him to his heart's content—and her own. She treated him as a man thrown away—absolutely thrown away in marriage; managed to insinuate that his wife was a “dowdy,” an ailing, spiritless creature, and the like; and he was cur enough to let her say these things—or rather hint them—unrebuked. While the fair Belle doped the man, her husband won his money at *écarté*: a double game which this precious pair played steadily, with a constant change of victims, much to their own advantage.

Laughing, talking, and making more noise than was at all well-bred, the trio at last set out upon their day's pleasuring, and Jane was left in peace.

Then she laid her down once more—rest, silence, time to think, those were the things she craved for. The rest was coming; the silence was near. The day was unusually fine and warm for so early in the year. It seemed as if the wind had worn itself out with its own violence, and the storm and gales of the last week changed to quiet, while fitful gleams of sunshine brightened a sky flecked with fleecy clouds white as driven snow.

Jane was sleeping with a smile upon her lips. Three hours later, when the housemaid stole upstairs to see if she could get her mistress to take a cup of tea, she was sleeping still more soundly.

Softly the shadows lay upon the bosom of the sea; birds were singing their sweet farewell to the day that was done; the room where Colonel Daubeney and his wife sat by a cheery pine-knot fire began to grow dark, save for the flicker of the resinous flames. The old people loved the gloaming, and always put off ringing for the lamp as long as they could. Many a time and oft did they hold long converse at such times about their dear child Jane, she who had gone out of their lives and left a silence such as may be felt when a strain of music, passing sweet, dies into silence. This evening their hearts seemed more than ever full of her. The colonel had just said he would give anything he had in the world to hear her singing once again about the house as she used to do, when, all at once, he grasped his wife's hand, and the two listened intently with straining ears.

What was that low far-off sound? Was it the sound of a voice loved and lost? They could catch no words, listen as they might,

but the old familiar melody of a song both had loved came plainly enough through the stillness, and then, between the parted curtains of the portière opposite, they saw Jane herself moving slowly towards them. Upon her face was a tender shadowy smile; her eyes shone with a soft and lambent light; her hands, white as lily-blossoms, fell in front of her, clasped the one in the other.

“Jane, Jane!” cried the colonel, and would have risen from his place but that his wife held him back; “Let me go,” he said hoarsely, putting her aside, but by the time he reached the other side of the room nothing was there save the growing shadows.

“Wife,” he said, coming back pale and shaking, “we have both been dreaming.”

Mrs. Daubeney only wept silently in answer. Her heart was full—full of dire and dread forebodings which she shrank from putting into words.

The next day strange news came to that quiet home.

Walter Hearn's wife had been found lying dead upon her bed; she had died in sleep, the smile still lingering about her lips, her cheek pillowed on her hand.

Jane Hearn's Trial was over. Her tired spirit, weary from the battle of life, from the struggle to hold the right, no matter at what cost, had drifted out into the “dream to come.”

Not alone, for no tidings ever reached England of the missing ship in which Guy Challoner had sailed away from his dear love. That story is one that will never be told “until the sea gives up its dead.”

WITH THE SHIPMEN AT ROUEN.

“*Le petit colis!*” In the deep bass of the man in shirt-sleeves at the door of his café, shading carefully with his hand the flame of a guttering candle. “*Le p'tit colis!*” queries sharply the conductor from the roof of the little omnibus, where he is bumping the big boxes about with painful effects on the ears of his inside passengers. “*Oui, le petit colis,*” rejoins the bass, briskly, almost defiantly. “*Ah! le petit colis,*” replies the alto, this time with appreciation and assurance, and the two join in a joyous duel: “*Bon, bon, entendu.*”

When you have risen at five on a winter's morning, and breakfasted on a “*café au rhum,*” everything becomes vocal, all goes at a pleasant gallop in the head. Even the monotonous rattle and jingle of

the omnibus shapes itself into song; the jog-trot of the horses, and the crackling whip of the driver. Darkness is all about; a refracted ray of light from the one lamp glances on the cheek of the man opposite; outside in a bright circle appear the horses' tails and quarters jogging up and down. Once off the stones of the little town the omnibus rolls softly along in the profound stillness of the country. Hours seem to pass, and we to be still rolling along in silence. The effect of the *café au rhum* wears off. As a feeble light shows in the sky, things about assume a certain chilly dismal consistency. Presently we stop still in the middle of the country with sentinel poplars on either side. The conductor gets down and stamps about the road and flaps his arms. Presently he comes to speak to the interior. "Here is the patron who arrives!"

This may be equivalent to Christmas is coming, for the halt is still protracted while daylight begins to break upon us. At last a sonorous objurgation is heard from the gloom, and one of the smallest omnibuses ever seen comes up at the crawl, accompanied by a perfect giant of a man—the patron, no doubt. Small as the omnibus is, it contains a goodly number of passengers, and more boxes to be bumped about in painful closeness to our ears. Two or three women press in, armed with fire-boxes primed with glowing charcoal; an old pilot, with his canvas bag, fur cap, and pea-jacket. We are somewhere near the river, although nothing can be seen of it. The women have just crossed the ferry, and they are talking of a ship that ran aground during the night. The old pilot looks at the women gravely under his shaggy eyebrows, but says nothing, although he ought to know something about the matter. Perhaps he was the pilot who ran the ship aground. All this time the enormous patron, who has a voice to match his bulk, is roaring out directions to our conductor, who has now subsided to second rank. A suggestion from this last as to the disposal of the baggage, in which "*le petit colis*" plays a part, is roared away to the winds. The big man mounts the box, the superseded conductor hangs on somewhere, and we are off again.

The landscape, cold and wan, is now faintly visible; a reach of the river here and there, marshy flats dotted with willows and poplars, and rolling downs beyond. But there is nothing of a sea-going character; there are no suggestions of sailors except the shaggy pilot, unless indirectly, as

the acrid fumes of the charcoal in the women's *chauffrettes* may suggest roasted chestnuts, sailors' wives, Tiger, Aleppo. But then Aleppo itself is not particularly maritime in these days, and the master of the Tiger might have to avail himself of the omnibus to reach his port of destination. Incoherent thoughts and overwhelming sleepiness follow as the Nemesis of too early a *café au rhum*. The spectre of a pursuing omnibus exactly the double of ours, pursuing, but never overtaking, may prove to be merely the phantom of a disturbed brain.

But here our small omnibus begins to crackle in an ear-splitting way; we are on the stones of a little riverain town and daylight falls upon us. Here is the tall signal mast displaying its canvas balloons over our heads, the steam *bac* plying across the river, and, as we draw up at the *Hotel des Postes*, a polyglot babble of voices, in which English decidedly prevails. The pursuing omnibus proves to be a part of the same enterprise as ours, and our joint contents are to be crammed into the big diligence yonder, which already seems well lined with passengers. But it really is a big diligence this time, and our enormous patron looks no longer out of place, but now quite in harmony with surrounding conditions. And it takes a big voice to dominate the hurly-burly about us. We are suddenly in presence of the shipmen, exuberant and frolicsome after a long voyage. The big diligence is stormed and carried by assault. They are very obliging, these seamen, and don't mind where they sit, on the roof or on the steps, anywhere, but somewhere they will sit, patron or no patron, for they are bound to get to "*Rawang*," anyhow. Well, here we are on the banquettes, sandwiched between a cosy looking *abbé*, with a discreet double-chin and a rosy cheek like a girl's, and a self-assertive young man in a variegated ulster; a Gallicised Yorkshireman, who has something to do with shipping, and acts as fogleman to the party. Before us, squeezed in on the driver's perch, is a real sea-captain from the elegant-looking Canadian *barqué* at anchor there in the river; she is waiting for the next tide to reach her port at Rouen. He is something of a swell this sea-captain, scrupulously shore-going in attire, with even something of the noble sportsman's air about him. The rest of the shipmen are clustered among the boxes and trunks on the roof—the hupper deck, as they call it. Beneath hatches we have a full cargo of people of the country, a young

priest, two or three blue-bloused peasants with hard nubbly faces, an old crone in a white cap, a pretty face under a capeline, and our bourgeoisie friends from la bas.

Just beyond the town we come upon a pleasant nook, the river full and placid, tall ships at anchor, their rigging mingling with the tracery of the leafless trees, others moored to the bank, great white cliffs dominating the scene. Men are picking and hacking at the face of the cliffs, bringing away great even blocks of the chalk, hard and compact, that are straight-way broken up and wheeled on board ship for ballast. No ballast for us, however, but instead more deck cargo in the shape of a Nova Scotian captain, a solemn man whose tall peaked felt hat and pointed beard give an appearance of marvellous length to a pallid face quite long enough on its own account. With him his owner, a fiery-faced little man with a game leg, who might once upon a time have been a shipwright; the purser, too, whose name is Joe. The upper deck is of indefinite capacity, and Nova Scotia is successfully stowed away. Off we go with a slight grinding, scraping sensation which calls forth the remark from aloft that "she might be a touching bottom."

Too soon we leave the river side, here at its best with all its suggestions of fruitful luxuriousness, its promises for the spring, when the apple-blossoms and cherry-blossoms shall make a glowing parterre of the whole valley; with its massive cliffs honeycombed by the caves of the troglodytes, and breaking up into strange fantastic forms with simulations of ancient castles and time-worn battlements. Here, too, is the seat of Gargantua, cushioned with a massive broad-backed down. But we turn away to cut off a great serpentine bend of the river, and shall see it no more till we come in sight also of the city of our hopes. The warmth of this favoured valley unlooses our tongues. The abbé indeed is buried in a copy of the Religious Week, but the Yorkshireman emerges from his muffler, and begins to talk to his friend the cap'n. He is telling him how he had visited "Rewang" only last Sunday. "Did you ride a-horseback?" asks the captain. "No, we had a trap, me and my missus." Further on the captain regrets that he had not come a-horseback. One could picture the stiff sea-captain on a bony hired horse, pounding along the smooth highly-metalled "route Nationale," the river on one hand, the white cliffs on the other.

The day fails to brighten up, and the hill-side looks wild and desolate: the dark vivid green of the pine forest, ashen-grey of the broken ground, dull brown of decayed heath and bracken, with a backing of cold grey windy sky. A place for bandits. "Ma foi, you are right," says the burly patron, turning round with approval. "It was here I was stopped in the winter of 1870." "By bandits?" "Mais oui—they were Prussians."

It is a toilsome drag over the back-bone of the hill. Nova Scotia has started to walk to the top. We see them liquoring up at a half-way café—captain, owner, and purser—leave them behind, indeed, with some misgivings as to their ever rejoining the convoy. When the captain has got his owner on board, and both are for liquoring up, with the purser agreeable, what guarantee is there for a speedy finish to the gala? But it turns out there is a very short cut, and when we reach the top we overtake the owner merrily stumping along with his game leg, breathless but smiling, while the long-faced captain and Joe have scarcely turned a hair.

In the hamlet that crowns the hill there are certain small indications of the neighbourhood of a large city: an effort in the way of decoration; saloons admirably adopted for nuptial and other feasts; more billiards than the resident population could possibly support; an over supply of chairs, tables, and benches; with suggestions, that give an extra twinge of chilliness to the wintry air, of arbours and leafy bowers.

Just a turn of the road and we seem to come upon a new world. A sea of mist is before us, boundless, unfathomable, while we are perched upon its rocky shore. One thinks of the legend of the city swallowed up bodily in the deep sea, for out of this cauldron of vapour come the jingle of church bells and the faint hum of the human hive. There are cries, too, from the river far below, or a steam-whistle booms sonorously through the fog. Rouen is below—that ancient famous city.

Some of the crew of the upper deck were a good deal exercised in mind when we reached the foot of the hill, and were stopped at the gate of the octroi. Old women trotted through, stopping for an instant while the blue-coated douanier peered suspiciously into their baskets, without exciting much remark. But when a young woman, with two or three pats of butter, and a pot of cream, was overhauled and made to pay blackmail, when they poked straws into her cream, and turned her pats of butter

upside down, there were signs of indignation from above. The proceedings of a dusty man in blue who prodded the hay-carts with a long iron spit in search of contraband also excited a good deal of attention. "What are they looking for, Silas?" queries a nasal voice. "Deserters, I expect." "Say, Silas," rejoins the nasal voice, whose owner seems to have been touched by the inhospitable reception accorded to such a deserting class of people; "there's a lot of tyranny in this blessed country!"

Rouen is ancient enough, no doubt, but she does not strike a stranger in that way at first sight. New shops, new streets, new tramways, with ridiculous little hobby-horse engines blowing penny trumpets by way of a whistle, and wagging their funnels playfully as they turn the corners, rumbling behind blue and white two-storeyed cars, a crowd of passengers on the first floor. It is a pleasant scene, too, on the quay, as a gleam of sunshine gilds the ships, the tangled web of rigging, the frosted yards. Here and there a cloud of steam curdles in the chill air, taking a hundred hues, from royal purple to the palest blue. There are islands, too—floating islands, they seem—masted with tall poplars, with big steamers lying alongside, all indistinct in the haze, so that it is hard to say whether the ships are moored to the island or the island to the ships. About everything is an uncertain misty glamour.

But what has become of our shipmen; they have given us the slip, and where shall we find them again? In this modern Rouen there is no waterside region properly so-called. Here are the quays with their custom-house, with their ship-brokers' offices, with their rows of casks and piles of merchandise, with their steam cranes, their tiers of shipping. But, after all, the stream of passers-by, the knots of loungers, are only faintly tinged with the nautical element. Here are fine cafés, restaurants redolent of savoury smells and with brisk Parisian waiters; but no signs of a sailor's haunt, no little cribs where they take in *The Shipping Gazette* and *The Cardiff Intelligencer*; no Wapping, and no Ratcliffe Highway. Imagine a seaman reading *Figaro*, or making himself at home on those divans of figured satin!

"Say, say, cap'n"—it was a tall blue-eyed Scandinavian who spoke, with a fur cap like a turban on his head, with a long shapeless coat that came down to his heels; a Scandinavian by blood, though he probably hailed from Sandy Hook or that neighbour-

hood—"Say, d'y'e feel like a drink just now?" "Well a' might," cautiously admitted his interlocutor, a pawky north-country steam captain trading Newcastle way probably. "Come along then, sonny." The two dived down a little street off the quay; they disappeared through a glass door. Above was the inscription: "Phibbs's Granville Hotel."

Outside reigns the jabber and clatter of a French town; and, changed in all else, Rouen still retains its character for noise. With the closing of the door all that is shut out: all the snatches of chansons, the ear-piercing street-cries, all the jangling of bells and jingling of grelots, all the resonant gabble of the streets. Within is profound silence, although the room already contains some half-dozen occupants. An ancient mariner sits in one corner by the fire, with a long clay pipe in his mouth—a real open fire; although, with a little inconsistency, where the chimney ought to be, with the pier-glass and the jars full of spills with the big snuff-box in the centre, is the zinc-lined counter of the bar. Thoroughly British in its equipments this last, redolent of old Irish and mellow Scotch, with Old Tom as the rose of the bouquet, and the polished handles suggestive of Foker and Company's entire. That fire either consumes its own smoke or hides it away in the cellar. The silence that strikes one in entering does not last long. It was due to the entrance of strangers—not to be strangers long, however, for the Newcastle captain sinks into a chair by the fire as if he felt himself at home, while the tall Yankee wanders restlessly about, hanging on sometimes to the corner of a table, sometimes to the back of a chair. "Aint we got a seat big enough for you, cap'n?" asks the ancient mariner, who seems to be somehow the president of the assembly, and as such to object to anything that mars the solemn stillness of the scene. Well, no; the giant concluded he'd hang about a bit. Presently comes in another American captain, also in a fur cap and long coat, and the two compatriots take hold by the collar and dance about, setting each other down in chairs, and jumping up again, in a lively irrepressible way. "Gentlemen," cried the ancient mariner, turning to the rest, "I object to Americanising our institutions." The Newcastle man smiles as he sips his ale, provided at his own demand, for the American seems to have forgotten why he came to Phibbs's.

"Say, Ellén, bring a cheese and pickles,"

cries the young Yankee at last; and Ellen opens her round dark eyes in wonder at the order. Certainly the young man has a curious notion of a drink—or is he sailing, perhaps, on temperance principles? The Yankees are not to have it all their own way, however, for presently our stiff Canadian comes in for a glass of bitters, and soon after the long-faced Nova Scotian, owner, purser, and all. And these last have more orthodox notions on the subject of drinks. Little Phibbs, in whom age has only dimmed an innate vivacity, knows them all, it seems, their ships and ports. If he mixes them up a little at times it is excusable, and nobody minds it. But there are certain favourites, about whom there is no mistake whatever. Brown, for instance, just in from New Orleans, in his pea-jacket, and with the flush of that last stiff nor'-wester still on his bronzed face. Brown is like the son of the household, and if he greets Ellen with a hearty kiss as she goes by, nobody thinks the worse of him, and assuredly Ellen does not. The news of Brown's arrival flies through the house, and presently Charlotte pops in her head—the rest of her not presentable yet—to nod a greeting to the captain, her ringlets a little disordered, and her face flushed as if she had herself been watching the last throes of the dinner. For dinner is ready, if you please, and you are requested not to keep it waiting. The tall Yankee does not look as if he could keep still long enough to get through a dinner, and flits away to somewhere else. The Newcastle captain is doubtful as to dinner. "Would ye be having a bit of roast veal now, Mr. Phibbs?" "There's a nice bit of roast beef, I think," says Phibbs, smacking his lips; "and greens—yes, I should say greens; and I wouldn't wonder if there wasn't a bit of horse-radish in the sauce; and a pudding—Charlotte is pretty sure to have made a pudding. But roast veal—no, I fancy we're to have roast veal to-morrow." "Well, I'll be coming in to-morrow, perhaps, then," says Newcastle cannily. Oh, Phibbs, Phibbs, why didn't we know of this before? Why did we waste the splendid appetite of this morning upon a fribbling table d'hôte breakfast? It is too late now to repine, but when the gallant sea-captains file out to their dinner they leave behind them a feeling of vacancy and regret. Ellen, too, is distraite. Her thoughts are not with us. Perhaps they are with the gallant Brown, or somebody far away. And the room is deserted

except for two stout Frenchmen, amateurs in whisky and students of manners. These, too, feel that the interest of Phibbs's is exhausted. "Fillons!" cries the thinner of the two. Yes, we will file.

After all, the air of the riverside is sweeter and purer than Phibbs's, and the fresh tarry whiff better than the mingled odour of spirits, tobacco, and waterproofing that hangs about the haunts of the shipmen. There is nothing like the energetic movement of a busy English port, but a pleasant liveliness, as ships move about and boats ply from side to side. But a few years ago, and the port of Rouen was an insignificant affair. A few brigs from the Mediterranean, with oily padrones and swart Italian sailors, or a tawny Spaniard with fruits, with some English colliers, and small trading steamers, made up the trade of the port. Now the aspect of things is changed. The quays are encumbered with tiers of vessels; stately ships that have battled with Atlantic gales come up with every tide. Something of this is due to the bad harvest of last year in France and elsewhere, which has brought about such an enormous importation of grain from over the Atlantic. The Americans have rediscovered Rouen, which is found to be a convenient dépôt for grain—far on the way to Paris, and at the head of the river and canal navigation of all France. A barge loaded from a ship at Rouen may find its way even as far as the Rhone, and discharge her cargo at Marseilles. Not half enough, indeed, has been made of the waterways of France; but she is going to change all that. Certainly, at Rouen just now, English-speaking shipmen have it hollow, even scoring on the other side the Scandinavians from the Baltic, bluff fair-haired Jonsons and Tomsons, more English-looking than the English.

The Scandinavians from the Baltic have never quite forgotten the way up the Seine; no, not from the days when they first pushed boldly up on the fierce tide, burning and destroying. One can picture the quaint cramped little town, girded by half-ruined walls of Roman masonry, the stream lapping up to its water-gate; a little town rising from among islets and swamps, with their firm background of hills. A terribly decayed little town, with half the shops to let; the temples in ruins, and nothing showing sign of life, unless here and there a grim convent, or quaint roman-esque little church, with their circling processions and hum of barbaric chants, or the

prison, perhaps, with white faces of starving debtors gleaming through its grated loopholes. And here, anchored by the mole, are the long venomous-looking ships of the Northmen, and a fair-haired, long-legged pirate—he wore a fur cap, probably, and a long shapeless coat, like yonder tall skipper, and was just such another homely, irascible, simple-minded, merciless shipman—listening with a slightly puzzled air, to the bishop's Latin oration. Latin it may be, but the purport is plain enough: "Spare our lives, become our lord." And thus the long-legged pirate, a cottar-farmer, perhaps, in his own country, rides a-horseback on the shoulders of a shattered civilisation.

But all the better for Rouen; for a change comes over the scene, such a change as you can fancy in a little doddering, shabby-genteel country town, taken in hand by a sturdy north-country navy who has made a fortune. River embanked, marshes drained, ships coming up with every tide, pirate nests cleared out, nobody allowed to plunder but the duke. Something in all this to set off against desolated plains, and a fruitful, peopled country turned into hunting-grounds.

And then in the march of a century or two we find Rouen and London, twin capitals of the Anglo-Norman state, in constant sea communication with complete free trade between the two. It was no fault of the Rouennais that the connection was severed, and that in after time, as Frenchmen, these Normans came to hate the English bitterly; it was not the result of national jealousy, but of hard blows constantly exchanged and mutual injuries. For, even when the two kingdoms were at peace, the shipmen of the opposite coasts were in a state of constant war. Under the French kings, however, Rouen dwindled as a seaport. And then Havre, founded upon the sandbanks at the river's mouth, partly as a check upon the English naval power, partly as a curb on the turbulent Rouennais, enjoying all the favours of the government, rose upon the decadence of Rouen. But as long as the Seine is a river, Rouen will remain a port, while Havre in the course of time, let us hope not in our time, may sink into the sands from which she sprang.

Already Rouen has regular steam communication with the north of England and with the Baltic ports. Some day, perhaps, we shall find about St. Katharine's Wharf a smart fast steamer taking in goods and passengers for Rouen just as regularly as

now for Antwerp or Ostend. And for travellers who are not in too much of a hurry what pleasanter end of a voyage than the passage up the Seine. For if the river cannot vie with the Rhine in diversified beauty, she has this great advantage, she is every inch a river, and a charming one from the very beginning. No dreary mud flats are hers, no wearisome dead level of marshes, but hills and noble cliffs with bright valleys and cheerful little towns all along. And as for an object for the voyage, well, Rouen, if she has put on a modern aspect and assumed the airs and graces of a provincial Paris, yet is she still rich with all her historic monuments.

It is pleasant as the sun is getting low to stroll upon the quays of Rouen, while in the splendid haze the islands, the ships, the river running molten gold, are shown all glorified and transmuted; and then, turning eastwards, to rest the dazzled eyes in the cool evening shades of above bridge. There the barges lie, many-coloured with gay fluttering pennants; and the barques of the washerwomen, festooned with white garments. And here, with the dark shadows of crazy buildings over the river, and shady creeks where boat-builders have set up their tents, we seem to have taken leave of sea-going Rouen, and to have come upon a softer, more tranquil existence. Over all this towers a grand buttress of rock, still bathed in sunshine, the Mount St. Catherine, harring the course of the river with its steep scarp'd sides—a noble leonine rock with a tuft of verdure over its massive brows. And quiet and peaceful now, with the glory upon it of the setting sun, we may remember how freely the blood of brave men has moistened that grassy slope. For the crumbling stones that scarcely break the smooth sky-line of the mount were once a strong fort, the key of Rouen, to take which was to have the town below at mercy. Our Harry the Fifth tried hard for it, and got it at last, with much bloodshed; while, later on, brave Talbot held on to it with mastiff grip, but saw it stormed at last and Rouen lost for England. Took it, too, in the teeth of staunch Protestant captains fighting for faith and life; did the splendid cruel Guise, the Medici looking on; while in the butchery that followed the young king might have learnt his lesson for the Bartholomew. This nut, too, Henry of Navarre tried to crack, but found it too hard for him, aided though he was by sturdy English allies under Essex. Much English blood, then, and French.

helps to make the grass so green, with odd strains from German reiters and Italian mercenaries. Then what a rendezvous of ghosts might meet on that hill-crest in the gathering shades of night!

A trumpet rings out with startling effect, echoed back from the hill in weird clamour. But it is nothing in the way of a summons to the dead—only the Three Hundred and Sixty-fifth regiment of the line, poor tired-looking little fellows, marching back to their barracks under the hill with resonant rattle and the twinkling of many legs. But the trumpet is a call to us also to rejoin the bulky patron and the big diligence.

Already, as we approach the starting-place, we hear the roar of the patron's voice. The vehicle stands there in the gloom like some monstrous animal, and the shipmen are swarming about it like Trojans about the wooden horse. Nova Scotia, too, is coming along, the skipper's long face whiter and his owner's ruddier than ever. Between them they prop up the purser; and the Yorkshireman in the variegated ulster is fighting for a place, while the patron drags him down by the legs. As a finale, a sailor clambering to the upper deck, with a confused notion as to rattling, by the way, drives a foot through the glasses, which fly into fragments, jingling noisily to the ground or falling softly on the heads of inside passengers. On the whole, perhaps, it will be more prudent to part company with the shipmen and stay at Rouen to-night, to hear *La Fille du Tambour Major* in the pretty little theatre.

generous a mould, he need it to Ranf's disadvantage. He did not make it public. He sought advice from a high authority in the isle, who, upon hearing the strange story, enjoined upon him the advisability of not babbling about it.

"It affects the well-being of the community," said the elder, "and until the truth is ascertained, must not be too freely discussed."

"The truth is as I have spoken."

"There is no reason to distrust you, but your senses may have been deceived. You say you do not know the woman you saw with Ranf."

"I did not recognise her; her face was not distinctly visible."

"She must be a woman of the isle."

"Yes—if she is mortal."

His interlocutor smiled, having no belief in the supernatural.

"It shall be enquired into. In the meantime, be discreet."

The matter was confided to six of the elders, who, in their deliberations, found themselves ever at a loss when the subject of the woman was introduced.

"It was not possible," they said, "that, unknown to them, Ranf could have brought a female to the isle."

Ranf was intimate with only three women among them—the Sylvesters and Evangeline. In their perplexity they sent for Matthew Sylvester. He listened to the story in silence.

"Your suspicion," he said, "points to one of the members of my household; but to my certain knowledge not one was absent from our home on the night of the adventure."

This added to the complication, and they determined that the hunchback should be called upon for an explanation. A summons was prepared in the following terms:

"To him known as Ranf:

"Whereas it has come to our knowledge that you are harbouring in your house a woman of the Silver Isle. In this, unless our informant is labouring under a delusion, the honour of the isle is concerned. You are amenable to our laws, which we shall not permit to be violated, and we call upon you to appear before us, and render a clear account of yourself. If you refuse, we shall know what course to take."

To this was appended the day and hour on which Ranf was expected to appear, and the signatures of the elders.

Who was to deliver the summons? It was necessary that Ranf should receive it

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXXI. RANF APPEARS BEFORE HIS JUDGES.

WHEN the interloper was clear of Ranf's house he felt as if he had escaped from prison, but once beyond the Valley of Lilies and out of immediate danger, the enchantment returned, and it seemed to him that he must have had a glimpse of the domain of a magician. At the same time he was animated by a feeling of resentment towards Ranf. He glowed with indignation at the affront to which Ranf had subjected him, not thinking that he had offered sufficient cause for it. It was in a tone of scornful defiance that Ranf had said, "Use your discovery." He was a young man, eager for revenge, and not being cast in too

personally, so that he might not have the excuse of ignorance to fall back upon. In this difficulty Matthew Sylvester offered himself.

"I will deliver the summons, and will bring back Ranf's reply."

He sought the hunchback that very day, and found him.

Ranf read the summons thoughtfully, and said:

"They are careful of their honour. What course will they take if I refuse to attend?"

"You will be banished from the isle."

"That would please them; but I will not give them the opportunity. So long as I keep within the law, they cannot touch me. I acknowledge their authority, and will obey the summons, on one condition. It is a condition I have a right to make."

"Name it. If it is just, they will not object."

"It is just. They say that I am harbouring a woman of the isle. If it be so, the woman is to be judged as well as I."

"That is so. She will be judged."

"It is right that she should be judged in my company. Tell them to amend the summons, so that it shall include all who are guilty. Women are weak creatures, and I may be better able to speak for this one than she for herself."

"Your condition will doubtless be complied with."

"Make them my full submission in all matters in which their honour is at stake. They will, perhaps, also grant me a little grace. Being on my trial, I have to prepare my defence. The summons is somewhat too sudden; let it be fixed for two days later than the day named herein."

"There will be no difficulty," said Matthew Sylvester, and prepared to depart; but Ranf detained him.

"You have not too high an opinion of me, Matthew Sylvester."

"I have never spoken against you, and I have often thought of you with sincere compassion."

"I thank you. In the earlier years of my life I suffered much from the injustice of men. I am not above advancing a claim to your compassion; but only to you and yours would I make such admission. It has often brought balm to my soul to think that in one house within this isle I was not regarded as an accursed thing."

"You have not been so regarded in my household. There are those there who love you."

"You do not speak for yourself?"

"No; when I have been drawn towards you, something has held me back. Indeed, your own attitude was sufficient. Frankly, I have had my doubts of you."

"And have them?"

"And have them."

"I had no need to ask the question; I can read men fairly well. That you have doubts, and that at the present time they are strengthened, is proved by your reticence with respect to the matter of this summons. Personally, you have not asked me a single question with respect to the charge—not a light one—which is here brought against me."

"I came to perform a duty," replied Matthew, "not to pry into another man's conscience."

"That is well said. Yet, when we take an interest in a man, we are not generally careless of what affects him. You can read between the lines, and can understand that I am anxious for your good will."

Matthew was silent.

"Matthew Sylvester," continued the hunchback, after a pause, "years ago you and I had a conversation upon a subject near to your heart."

"I remember; it related to my daughter, Margaret, and the sister who was torn from her."

"Her sister Clarice."

"Yes."

"There is a secret concerning that sister which you and I share; it has been safe in my keeping."

"And in mine."

"Events are taking a strange course. Within these hundred hours I have traced in the air the writing of fate. You are about to quit your house."

"It has been mine by courtesy only. Its master has arrived, to take possession of his own. Another house is now being built for us."

"I know. You have never seen this Mauvain?"

"Never."

"He is not alone. There comes with him a friend, a sculptor, Harold by name, whom also you have never seen?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Yet the lines of his life and of those lives most dear to you have crossed, and may cross again. If this latter happen, I shall be no passive spectator, and what action I may take will be in the interests of those you love. There was a time when you were inclined to be friendly towards me."

"I am still so inclined; but you have made such a desire most difficult of accomplishment."

"It is my way, and men must take me as I am."

"I perceive your drift, and I will endeavour to satisfy you. Is the charge in this summons true?"

"To what extent?"

"That there lives in your house a woman of the Silver Isle?"

"It is true. And you and others near to you shall judge from evidence, not from hearsay, how far I have stained the honour of the isle. I make, therefore, still another stipulation which you will convey to those who sent you to me. I ask that you and your children, Paul and Margaret Sylvester, shall be present at the examination. You will come?"

"Yes, if we are allowed."

"I shall insist upon it. You can then be witnesses of my disgrace."

Matthew Sylvester related to the islanders the particulars of his interview with the hunchback, and all that the accused man demanded was granted without demur.

At the appointed time there were assembled in the court-house twelve magistrates of the Silver Isle, prepared to hear the explanation Ranf had to give. There were also present the three elder members of the Sylvester family whom Ranf stipulated should be present; the man who had given the information against the hunchback, and Harold, who came straight from the ship lying at anchor in the bay. On this day the court was closed to the public, and two officers standing at the door allowed only those to enter to whom permission had been given. As Harold entered a delicate perfume spread through the hall; he was exquisitely dressed and gloved, and with a purposed affectation gave himself the airs of a dandy. He was really curious regarding the proceedings about to take place, but the impression he conveyed was that he had come to an entertainment which had been prepared for his amusement, and that he was graciously willing, in an idle way, to be amused.

When he entered, Margaret Sylvester was talking to Matthew, and their backs towards him. He bowed to the court, and taking the seat allotted to him, arranged himself upon it with an easy grace. This done, he allowed his eyes to wander from face to face, until they rested on the face of Margaret Sylvester. "By Heaven!" he thought, but it was a discovery of so

much interest that his lips formed the unspoken words: "the woman with the voice of the nightingale!" As the thought crossed his mind, Margaret's eyes met his, and were held spell-bound. Her face grew white, and her bosom rose and fell. "Harold," thought the sculptor, still silently addressing himself: "the Silver Isle promises to be prolific of sensation. There is a future before you." Matthew Sylvester, observing Margaret's agitation, stepped to the president's side, and whispered a few words to him.

"Friends," said the president aloud, with a motion of his hand towards Harold, "this gentleman is a friend of Mauvain's, who will presently take up his residence among us. His name is Harold."

Harold rose and bowed with infinite grace, murmuring:

"Very much at your service. I trust we shall be friends."

They all bent their heads, with the exception of Margaret, who, at the sound of his voice, closed her eyes, like one in a dream.

"We expected Mauvain," said the president.

"He desired me," said Harold, in his softest tones, "to present his regrets that he is unable to attend. He suffers frightfully whenever the slightest demand for exertion is made upon him. He comes from an old family; his complaints, his vices, his virtues are hereditary, and consequently he is scarcely accountable for them. New men do not understand that such as Mauvain are made of finer stuff than themselves. I speak to men of sense who will appreciate the truth of what I say." What his hearers did appreciate was the tone of exquisite polish in which he spoke. "Mauvain," continued Harold, "regrets his absence the more because it prevents him from witnessing a scene so remarkable as this. It is years since he saw his friend the hunchback, and it would have been a happiness to him could he have personally attended, and testified to the virtues of a creature so interesting. Should it be the hunchback's fate to fall under your displeasure, it will grieve Mauvain to the heart—really, to the heart. But doubtless it will be my good fortune to describe to my friend how completely the stranger whom, for his sake, you welcomed to your isle, has cleared himself of any charge you may bring against him. He has but his virtues to recommend him. Little enough; but man is frail, and we

must not bear too hard on imperfection. I myself have erred"—his eyes rested here on Margaret's face—"and am disposed to be lenient."

"We are judges," said the president, coldly. "We accept you as Mauvain's representative. You shall see that we know how to dispense justice."

"Who can doubt it?" murmured Harold, sinking languidly into his seat as the hunchback entered the court.

Ranf's entrance was opportune; it was as though he had timed this dialogue to the moment. He was accompanied by a woman, muffled from head to foot in a scarlet cloak, the hood of which covered her head, and concealed her features. All eyes were turned to her, but she stood, evidently in accordance with instructions, by Ranf's side with her head inclined to the ground. Harold was the only person in whose eager gaze there was not something of pain. "Dramatic," he murmured; "very dramatic. A touch of art."

For full a minute Ranf and Harold gazed steadily at each other. Harold's face expressed amusement; Ranf's, contempt.

"Decidedly," thought Harold, "the hunchback is not of a forgiving nature. He harbours resentment, and has grown even more stunted and ill-favoured."

At this point a disturbance occurred, which claimed attention. One of the officers of the court informed the president that a man demanded admittance, and would not be denied.

"What authority has he for intrusion?" asked the president.

"This," replied the officer, presenting a paper to the court.

It proved to be a letter from Ranf, requesting the bearer's presence in a case reflecting upon the honour of his family. The letter was addressed to Daniel Christof, a name well known and once honoured in the Silver Isle. At the utterance of this name by the president, the draped figure at Ranf's side shuddered, but Ranf's strong hand upon her shoulder restrained any further expression of emotion.

"Is this in your hand?" asked the president of Ranf, holding out the letter.

"It is," replied Ranf.

"Is Daniel Christof's presence necessary for your vindication?"

"I deem it both just and necessary that he should be witness of these proceedings."

"Admit him," said the president to the officer.

There entered an old man, wild-looking

and haggard, bent down by age and suffering. His form was spare, his hands long and thin, and in his blue eyes dwelt a wandering look which never for longer than a moment rested upon any one object.

"My crooked friend," thought Harold, as he contemplated the grouping, "has an eye for effect. This composition would do credit to an artist."

"Daniel Christof," said the president, with much pity in his voice, "you are here by no wish of those who loved and honoured you. We, who have ever sympathised with your deep misfortunes, would have left you in your solitude to work out your peace with Heaven. But your presence is demanded by one who stands before us for justice."

Daniel Christof raised his hands with a trembling motion, indicating that he heard and understood, but he uttered no word.

"The court now empanelled," said the president, addressing Ranf, "has full authority over the affairs of the isle. We received you among us in good faith, and gave you welcome. Such welcome, although it is not imbued with the spirit we would desire—a fault not ours—will not be withdrawn, if it is made apparent to us that you have not transgressed our laws. Indeed, it cannot be withdrawn without full and ample cause. We would mete out to you even a larger toleration than we would accord to each other. But you stand within our jurisdiction, and it is in our power to banish you from the isle, being a stranger living in our land by courtesy, should it be proved that you have brought disgrace and dishonour upon one of our people. You may recognise the justice of my words."

"They are words," said Ranf, "I myself should use, were I in your place and you in mine."

"If that is an indication of the spirit in which you meet us, we shall not underrate its value in the task before us. It happens, fortunately or otherwise, that at this juncture the two men who are responsible for your presence on the Silver Isle, have come among us, and one is present here to-day. It may be that he will use his influence on your behalf."

"I do not need it," said Ranf, with a quiet scorn. "I can plead my own cause. Let your accusation be plain and to the point, as my answer shall be. I shall listen with patience, however hard your words and suspicions. In return, I shall

expect that you will listen with patience to what I shall have to say."

"You shall have no reason to complain. Listen now to the statement which has occasioned these proceedings."

Thereupon the president gave a minute and clear account of the visit of the young islander to the hunchback's grounds, and of his experiences during the night of his visit. From time to time Ranf nodded his head in confirmation of the truth of the relation, and when it was finished, said:

"There is nothing to dispute; the statement is correct, as far as it is in my power to vouch for it, and the omission of one trifling detail does not affect it—in my estimation, although it may in yours."

"Supply the omission," said the president, "before you answer the charge. Trifling as it is, it may be of importance."

"As you will; although I repeat that in strict justice it should not affect your decision. When I confronted the man who had unwarrantably stolen into my grounds, and could not obtain from him a satisfactory answer to my question as to what brought him there, I called to my side a dog which, with other animals and birds, I have imported. I perceive that the man who gives evidence against me calls this dog a savage beast; whereas in fact he is but a dog, a singularly gentle creature, as harmless as an infant when not molested. He has, it is true, a vice—the vice of faithfulness; he would not patiently see his master hurt, and one word from me is sufficient to rouse in him a just fury, more powerful than mortal's. During our interview my faithful servant stood quietly by my side, yet I had but to whisper the word, and the man's life would not have been worth a moment's purchase. The word was not spoken, and your brave islander departed in safety. There is something more. I myself have more than an ordinary man's strength; I gave my ill-wisher a proof of this, being careful not to hurt so tender a being. I knew that no person on the isle was acquainted with his mission; he told me as much, and I read the truth in his face. Therefore I could have killed him, and none, even if they suspected, could

have brought the crime home to me; for I am wary when occasion demands, and in cunning, the equal of straighter men. It might occur to some of you that, had I anything to conceal which I was fearful of being discovered, I, a suspected, morose being, ungainly, unfriendly, hating and hated, whose life was linked to yours by no possible link of sympathy, who had lived among you shunned and avoided, who never by look or word courted your favour, who was, indeed, as disdainful of you as you were of him, who offended you by refusing to join in your religious observances, who would not eat with you or drink with you, who in the regulation of his life acknowledged no law but his own, it might, I say, occur to some of you that, had I anything to fear which this one man could bring to light, I would have swept him from this world into the next without remorse, without pity. But I had no such prompting; angered as I was, I spared his life, and allowed him to depart in absolute safety. It is a small detail, but I scorn to accept it in my favour. I stand upon my right, and no small side-issues shall help to assert my guilt or innocence. I know where you are weak, and where you are strong. I know how cruel, how kind, how merciless, how merciful, how pitiless, and how just you are, and I am content that you shall be my judges on the broad lines of right and wrong."

"This crooked man," thought Harold, "has proved himself an artist, perfect in colour and composition. The scarlet cloak on that woman by his side is most effective; he must have studied all the accessories of his picture. He proves himself now to be a special pleader of whom civilised courts might be proud. What next?"

Upon the others Ranf's unstudied address had a powerful effect. It almost seemed as though he were the judge, and they the persons who were to be judged.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIKEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER. II. "AND THIS WAS GLADLY IN THE EVENTIDE."

DAPHNE was as still as a statue, her vanity gratified by this homage to her charms. There had been nobody to admire her at Asnières but the old music-master, into whose hat she had sometimes put a little bouquet from the trim suburban garden, or a spray of acacia from the grove that screened the maiden meditations of Madame Tolmache's pupils from the vulgar gaze of the outside world. She retained her recumbent attitude patiently for nearly an hour, half-asleep in the balmy afternoon atmosphere, while the outraged Martha sat on her rock apart, digging her everlasting crochet-hook into the fluffy mass of wool, and saying never a word.

The stranger was nearly as silent as Martha. He was working industriously at his sketch, and smoking his cigar as he worked, having first ascertained that the ladies were tolerant of the weed. He painted in a large dashing style that got over the ground very quickly, and made a good effect. He had nearly finished his sketch of the figure on the rock—the indigo gown, scarlet ribbon, bright hair, and dark luminous eyes, when Daphne jumped up suddenly, and vowed that her every limb was an agony to her.

"I couldn't endure it an instant longer!" she exclaimed. "I hope you've finished."

"Not quite; but you may change your attitude as much as you like if you'll only keep your head the same way. I am working at the face now."

"What are you going to do with the picture when it's finished?"

"Keep it till my dying day."

"I thought you would perhaps give it—I mean sell it—to me. I could not afford a large price, for my people are very poor, but——"

"Your looking-glass will show you a better portrait than this poor sketch of mine. And in after years even this libellous daub will serve to remind me of a happy hour in my life."

"I am glad you have enjoyed yourself," said Daphne; "but I really wish you had eaten that fowl. Have you far to go home to dinner?"

"Only to Fontainebleau."

"You are living there?"

"I am staying there. I may strike my tent and be across the Jura to-morrow night. I never live anywhere."

"But haven't you a home and people?"

"I have a kind of home, but no people."

"Poor fellow!" murmured Daphne, with exquisite compassion. "Are you an orphan?"

"Yes; my father died nine years ago, my mother last year."

"How awfully sad! No brothers or sisters?"

"None. I am a crystallisation, the last of a vanishing race. And now I have done as much as I dare to your portrait. Any attempt at finish would result in failure. I am writing the scene and the date in the corner of my sketch. May I write your name?"

"My name!" exclaimed Daphne, her eyes sparkling with mischief, her cheeks curving into dimples.

"Yes; your name. You have a name, I suppose, unless you are the nameless

spirit of sunlit woodlands, masquerading in a blue gown?"

"My name — is — Poppæa," faltered Daphne, whose latest chapter of Roman history had been the story of Nero and his various crimes, toned down and expurgated to suit young ladies' schools.

Poppæa Sabina, thus chastely handled, had appeared nothing worse than a dressy lady of extravagant tastes, who took elaborate care of her complexion, and had a fancy for shoeing her mules with gold.

"Did you say Poppet?" enquired the stranger.

"No; Poppæa. You must have heard the name before, I should think. It is a Roman name. My father is a great classical scholar, and he chose it for me. And pray what is your name?"

"Nero."

The stranger pronounced the word without moving a muscle of his face, still intent upon his sketch; for it is vain for a man to say he has finished a thing of that kind; so long as his brushes are within reach, he will be putting in new ideas. There was not a twinkle in those dubious eyes of his — not an upward move of those mobile lips. He was as grave as a judge.

"I don't believe it!" cried Daphne, bouncing up from her rock.

"Don't believe what?"

"That your name is Nero."

"Why not? Have I not as good a right to bear a Roman name as you have? Suppose I had a classical father as well as you. Why not?"

"It is too absurd."

"Many things are absurd which yet are absolutely true."

"And you are really called Nero?"

"As really as you are called Poppæa."

"It is so dreadfully like a dog's name."

"It is a dog's name. But you may call your dog Bill, or Joe, or Paul, or Peter. I don't think that makes any difference. I would sooner have some dogs for my namesakes than some men."

"Dibb, dear," said Daphne, turning sharply upon the victim of her folly, the long-suffering, patient Martha. "What's the time?"

She had a watch of her own, a neat little gold hunter, but it was rarely in going order for two consecutive days, and she was generally dependent on the methodical Dibb for all information as to the flight of time.

"A quarter to five."

"Then we must be going home instantly.

How could you let me stay so long, you foolish girl? I am sure it must be more than an hour's walk to the town, and we promised poor dear Toby to be home by six."

"It isn't my fault," remarked Miss Dibb; "I should have been glad to go ever so long ago, if you had thought fit."

"Hurry up, then, Dibb dear. Put away your crochet. Have you quite done with my block?" to the unknown. "Thank you muchly. And now my box? Those go into the basket. Thanks, awfully," as he helped her to pack the tumblers, cork-screw, plates, and knives, which had served for their primitive repast. "And now we will wish you good-day—Mr.—Nero."

"On no account. I am going to carry that basket back to Fontainebleau for you."

"All along that dusty high road. We couldn't think of such a thing; could we, Martha?"

"I don't know that my opinion is of much account," said Martha stiffly.

"Don't, you dear thing!" cried Daphne, darting at her and hugging her affectionately. "Don't try to be ill-tempered, for you can't do it. The thing is an ignominious failure. You were created to be good-natured, and nice, and devoted—especially to me."

"You know how fond I am of you," murmured Martha reproachfully; "and you take a mean advantage of me when you go on so."

"How am I going on? Is it very dreadful to let a gentleman carry a heavy basket for me?"

"A gentleman!" muttered Martha, with a supercilious glance at the stranger's well-worn velvetreen.

He was standing a little way off, out of hearing, taking a last long look at the valley.

"Yes; and every inch a gentleman, though his coat is shabby, and though he may be as poor as Job, and though he makes game of me!" protested Daphne with conviction.

"Have your own way," replied Martha.

"I generally do," answered Daphne.

And so they went slowly winding downhill in the westering sunshine, all among the grey rocks on which the purple shadows were deepening, the warm umber lights glowing, while the rosy evening light came creeping up in the distant west, and the voice of an occasional bird, so rare in this Gallic wood, took a vesper sound in the summer stillness.

The holiday makers had all gone home. The French matron who had taken her rest so luxuriously, surrounded by her olive-branches, had put on her boots and departed. The women who sold cakes and fruit had packed up their wares and gone away. All was silence and loneliness, and for a little while Daphne and her companions wandered on in quiet enjoyment of the scene and the atmosphere, treading the mossy, sandy path that wound in and out among the big rocks, sometimes nearly losing themselves, and anon following the blue arrow-points which a careful hand had painted on the rocks to show them which way they should go.

But Daphne was not given to silence. She found something to talk about before they had gone very far.

"You have travelled immensely, I suppose!" she said to the stranger.

"I don't know exactly what significance you attach to the word. Young ladies use such large words nowadays for such very small things. From a scientific explorer's point of view, my wanderings have been very limited, but I daresay one of Cook's tourists would consider me a respectable traveller. I have never seen the buried cities of Central America, nor surveyed the world from the top of Mount Everest, nor even climbed the Caucasus, nor wandered by stormy Hydaspes: but I have done Egypt, and Algeria, and Greece, and all that is tolerably worth seeing in southern Europe, and have come to the conclusion that, although Nature is mountainous, life is everywhere more or less flat, stale, and unprofitable."

"I'm sure I shouldn't feel that if I were free to roam the world, and could paint as sweetly as you do."

"I had a sweet subject, remember."

"Please don't," cried Daphne; "I rather like you when you are rude, but if you flatter I shall hate you."

"Then I'll be rude. To win your liking I would be more uncivil than Petruchio!"

"Katharine was a fool!" exclaimed Daphne, skipping up the craggy side of one of the biggest rocks. "I have always despised her. To begin so well, and end so tamely!"

"If you don't take care you'll end by slipping off that rock, and spraining an ankle or two," said Nero warningly.

"Not I," answered Daphne confidently; "you don't know how used I am to climbing. Oh, look at that too delicious lizard!"

She was on her knees admiring the emerald-hued changeful creature. She

touched it only with her breath, and it flashed away from her, and vanished in some crevice of the rock.

"Silly thing, did it think I wanted to hurt it, when I was only worshipping its beauty," she cried.

Then she rose suddenly, and stood on the rock, a slim girlish figure, with fluttering drapery, poised as lightly as Mercury, gazing round her, admiring the woodland scenery, the long vista of rocks, the dark wall of fir-trees, mounting up and up to the edge of a saffron-tinted sky—for these loiterers had lost count of time since steady-going Martha looked at her reliable watch, and the last of the finches had sung his lullaby to his wife and family, and the golden ship called Sol had gone down to night's dark sea.

"Come down, you absurd creature!" exclaimed Nero, with a peremptory voice, winding one arm about the light figure, and lifting the girl off the rock as easily as if she had been a feather-weight.

"You are very horrid!" protested Daphne indignantly. "You are ever so much ruder than Petruchio. Why shouldn't I stand on that rock? I was only admiring the landscape!"

"No doubt, and two minutes hence you would be calling upon us to admire a fine example of a sprained ankle."

"I'm sure if your namesake was ever as unkind to my namesake, it's no wonder she died young," said Daphne, pouting.

"I believe he was occasionally a little rough upon her," answered the artist with his imperturbable air. "But of course you have read your Tacitus and your Suetonius in the original. Young ladies know everything nowadays."

"The Roman history we read is by a clergyman, written expressly for ladies' schools," said Miss Dibb demurely.

"How intensely graphic and interesting that chronicle must be!" retorted the stranger.

They had come to the end of the winding path among the rocks by this time, and were in a long straight road, cut through the heart of the forest, between tall trees that seemed to have outgrown their strength—weedy-looking trees, planted too thickly, and only able to push their feeble growth up towards the sun, with no room for spreading bough, or interlacing roots. The evening light was growing grave and grey. Bats were skimming across the path, uncomfortably near Daphne's flowing hair. Miss Dibb began to grumble.

"How dreadfully we have loitered!" she

cried, looking at her watch. "It is nearly eight, and we have so far to go. What will Miss Toby say?"

"Well, she will moan a little, no doubt," answered Daphne lightly, "and will tell us that her heart has been in her mouth for the last hour, which need not distress us much, as we know it's a physical impossibility; and that anyone might knock her down with a feather—another obvious impossibility, seeing that poor Toby weighs eleven stone—and then I shall kiss her and make much of her, and give her the packet of nougat I mean to buy on the way home, and all will be sunshine. She takes a sticky delight in nougat. And now please talk and amuse us," said Daphne, turning to the artist with an authoritative air. "Tell us about some of your travels, or tell us where you live when you're at home."

"I think I'd rather talk of my travels. I've just come from Italy."

"Where you have been painting prodigiously, of course. It is a land of pictures, is it not?"

"Yes; but Nature's pictures are even better than the treasures of art."

"If ever I should marry," said Daphne with a dreamy look, as if she were contemplating an event far off in the dimness of twenty years hence, "I should insist upon my husband taking me to Italy."

"Perhaps he wouldn't be able to afford the expense," suggested the practical Martha.

"Then I wouldn't marry him," Daphne retorted decisively.

"Isn't that rather a mercenary notion?" asked the gentleman with the basket.

"Not at all. Do you suppose I should marry just for the sake of having a husband? If ever I do marry—which I think is more than doubtful—it will be, first and foremost, in order that I may do everything I wish to do and have everything I want to have. Is there anything singular in that?"

"No; I suppose it is a young beauty's innate idea of marriage. She sees herself in her glass, and recognises perfection, and knows her own value."

"Are you married?" asked Daphne abruptly, eager to change the conversation when the stranger became complimentary.

"No."

"Engaged?"

"Yes."

"What is she like?" enquired Daphne eagerly. "Please tell us about her. It

will be ever so much more interesting than Italy, for, after all, when one hasn't seen a country description goes for so little. What is she like?"

"I could best answer that question in one word if I were to say she is perfection."

"You called me perfection just now," said Daphne pettishly.

"I was talking of your face. She is perfection in all things. Perfectly pure, and true, and good, and noble. She is handsome, highly accomplished, rich."

"And yet you go wandering about the world in that coat," exclaimed Daphne, too impulsive to be polite.

"It is shabby, is it not? But if you knew how comfortable it is you wouldn't wonder that I have an affection for it."

"Go on about the lady, please. Have you been long engaged to her?"

"Ever since I can remember, in my heart of hearts: she was my bright particular star when I was a boy at school: she was my sole incentive to work, or decent behaviour, when I was at the University. And now I am not going to say any more about her. I think I have told you enough to gratify any reasonable curiosity. Ask me conundrums, young ladies, if you please, or do something to amuse me. Remember, I am carrying the basket, and a man is something more than a beast of burden. My mind requires relaxation."

Martha Dibb grinned all over her broad frank face. Riddles were her delight. She had little manuscript books filled with them in her scrawly, pointed writing. She began at once, like a musical-box that has been wound up, and did not leave off asking conundrums till they were half-way down the long street leading to the palace, near where Miss Toby and her pupils had their lodging.

But Daphne had no intention that the stranger should learn exactly where she lived. Reckless as she was, mischievous as Puck or Robin Goodfellow, she had still a dim idea that her conduct was not exactly correct, or would not be correct in England. On the Continent, of course, there must be a certain license. English travellers dined at public tables, and gamed in public rooms—were altogether more sociable and open to approach than on their native soil. It was only a chosen few—the peculiarly gifted in stiffness—who retained their glacial crust through every change of scene and climate, and who would perish rather than cross the street ungloved, or discourse familiarly with

an unaccredited stranger. But, even with due allowance for Continental laxity, Daphne felt that she had gone a little too far. So she pulled up suddenly at the corner of a side street and demanded her basket.

"What does that mean?" asked the painter with a look of lazy surprise.

"Only that this is our way home, and that we won't trouble you to carry the basket any further, thanks intensely."

"But I am going to carry it to your door."

"It's awfully good of you to propose it, but our governess would be angry with us for imposing on the kindness of a stranger, and I'm afraid we should get into trouble."

"Then I haven't a word to say," answered the painter, smiling at her blushing, eloquent face. Verily a speaking face—beautiful just as a sunlit meadow is beautiful, because of the lights and shadows that flit and play perpetually across it.

"Do you live in this street?"

"No; our house is in the second turning to the right, seven doors from the corner," said Daphne, who had obtained possession of the basket. "Good-bye."

She ran off with light swift foot, followed lumpishly and breathlessly by the scandalised Martha.

"Daphne, how could you tell him such an outrageous story?" she exclaimed.

"Do you think I was going to tell him the truth?" asked Daphne, still fluttering on, light as a lapwing. "We should have had him calling on Miss Toby to-morrow morning to ask if we were fatigued by our walk, or perhaps singing the serenade from Don Giovanni under our windows to-night. Now, Martha dearest, don't say one word; I know I have behaved shamefully, but it has been awful fun, hasn't it?"

"I'm sure I felt ready to sink through the ground all the time," panted Martha.

"Darling, the ground and you are both too solid for there to be any fear of that."

They had turned a corner by this time, and, doubling and winding, always at a run, they came very speedily to the quiet corner near the palace, where their governess had lodged them in a low blind-looking white house, with only one window that commanded a view of the street.

They had been so fleet of foot, and had so doubled on the unknown, that, from this upper window, they had presently the satisfaction of seeing him come sauntering along the empty street, careless, indifferent, with dreamy eyes looking forward into vacancy, a man without a care.

"He doesn't look as if he minded our

having given him the slip one little bit," said Daphne.

"Why should he?" asked the matter-of-fact Martha. "I daresay he was tired of carrying the basket."

"Go your ways," said Daphne, with a faint sigh, waving her hand at the vanishing figure. "Go your ways over mountain and sea, through wood and valley. This world is a big place, and it isn't likely you and I will ever meet again." Then, turning to her companion with a sudden change of manner, she exclaimed: "Martha, I believe we have both made a monstrous mistake."

"As how?" asked Miss Dibb stupidly.

"In taking him for a poor artist."

"He looks like one."

"Not he. There is nothing about him but his coat that looks poor, and he wears that as if it were purple and ermine. Did you notice his eye when he ordered us to change the conversation, an eye accustomed to look at inferiors? And there is a careless pride in his manner, like a man who believes that the world was made on purpose for him, yet doesn't want to make any fuss about it. Then he is engaged to a rich lady, and he has been at a university. No, Martha, I am sure he is no wandering artist living on his pencil."

"Then he must think all the worse of us," said Martha solemnly.

"What does it matter?" asked Daphne, with a careless shrug. "We have seen the last of each other."

"You can never be sure of that. One might meet him at a party."

"I don't think you will," said Daphne, faintly supercilious, "and the chances are ever so many to one against even my meeting him anywhere."

Here Miss Toby burst into the room. She had been lying down in an adjacent chamber, resting her poor bilious head, when the girls came softly in, and had only just heard their voices.

"Oh, you dreadful girls, what hours of torture you have caused me!" she exclaimed. "I thought something must have happened."

"Something did happen," said Daphne; whereupon Martha thought she was going to confess everything.

"What?"

"A lizard."

"Did it sting you?"

"No; it darted away when I looked at it. A lovely glittering green thing. I wish I could tame one and wear it for a necklace. And I nearly fell off a rock:

ed I tried hard to paint the valley, and made a most dismal failure. But the view from the hill is positively delicious; Toby dear, and the rocks are wonderful; huge masses of granite tumbled about among the trees anyhow, as if Titans had been pelting one another. It's altogether lovely. You must go with us to-morrow, Toby love."

Miss Toby, diverted from her intention to scold, shook her head despondingly.

"I should like it of all things," she sighed. "But I am such a bad walker, and the heat always affects my head. Besides, I think we ought to go over the palace to-morrow. There is so much instruction to be derived from a place so full of historical associations."

"No doubt," answered the flippant Daphne, "though if you were to tell me that it had been built by Julius Cæsar or Alfred the Great, I should hardly be wise enough to contradict you."

"My dear Daphne, after you have been so carefully grounded in history," remonstrated Miss Toby.

"I know, dear; but then you see I have never built anything on the ground. It's very well to dig out foundations, but if we never gets any further than that! But we'll see the palace to-morrow, and you will teach me no end of history while we are looking at pictures and things."

"If my poor head be well enough," sighed Miss Toby, and then she began to move languidly to and fro, arranging for the refreshment of her pupils, who wanted their supper.

When the supper was ready Daphne could eat nothing, although five minutes before she had declared herself ravenous. She was too excited to eat. She talked of the rest, the view, the heat, the sky, everything except the stranger, and his name was emblazoned on her lips perpetually. Every now and then she pulled herself up abruptly in the middle of a sentence, flashed a vivid glance at stolid Martha, her dark grey eyes shining like stars, full of mischievous light. She would have liked to tell Miss Toby everything, but to do so might be to surrender all future liberty. Head-ache or no headache, the honest little governess would never have allowed her pupils to wander about alone again, could she have beheld them, in her mind's eye, cackling with a nameless stranger.

There was a little bit of garden at the back of the low white house, hardly more than a green court-yard, with a square grass plot and a few shrubs, into which

enclosure the windows all looked, save that one peep-hole towards the street. Above the white wall that shut in the bit of green rose the foliage of a much larger garden—acacias shedding their delicate perfume on the cool night, limes just breaking into flower, dark-leaved magnolias, tulip-trees, birch, and aspen—a lovely variety of verdure. And over all this shone the broad disk of a ripening moon, flooding the world with light.

When supper was over Daphne bounded out into the moonlit garden, and began to play at battledore and shuttlecock. She was all life and fire and movement, and could not have sat still for the world.

"Come," she cried to Martha; "bring your battledore. A match for a franc's worth of nougat."

Miss Dibb had settled herself to her everlasting crochet by the light of two tall candles. Miss Toby was reading a Tauchnitz novel.

"I'm tired to death," grumbled Martha. "I'm sure we must have walked miles upon miles. How can you be so restless?"

"How can you mope indoors on such an exquisite night?" exclaimed Daphne. "I feel as if I could send my shuttlecock up to the moon. Come out and be beaten! No; you are too wise. You know that I should win to-night."

The little toy of cork and feathers quivered high up in the bright air; the slender, swaying figure bent back like a reed as the girl looked upward; the fair golden head moved with every motion of the battledore as the player bent or rose to anticipate the flying cork.

She was glad to be out there alone. She was thinking of the unknown all the time. She could not get him out of her mind. She had a vague, unreasonable idea that he must be near her; that he saw her as she played; that he was hiding somewhere in the shadow yonder, peeping over the wall; that he was in the moon—in the night—everywhere; that it was his breath which fluttered those leaves trembling above the wall; that it was his footfall she heard rustling among the shrubs—a stealthy, mysterious sound mingling with the plish-plash of the fountain in the next garden. She had talked lightly enough a little while ago of having seen the last of him: yet now, alone with her thoughts in the moonlit garden, it seemed as if this nameless stranger were interwoven with the fabric of her life, a part of her destiny for evermore.

CONVENTIONALITIES.

I SUPPOSE that "Conventionalities" are to a large extent identical with the shams which, a generation ago, came in for such plentiful castigation, but which appear to flourish pretty nearly as vigorously as ever. If so, then our conventionalities have, as might be expected, a property in common with the shams—that of being exceedingly difficult to kill. Some are very serious, underlying and perhaps undermining society, and are too grave to be treated in these lines; so on the whole I will be content with dealing with some of the smaller fry.

The first consideration, however, is: Could we get on without our accepted conventionalities? If we got rid of our whole system, and were obliged to be new, earnest, original, or studious, as the case demanded, what a dreadful strain on our minds it might be! The tight hold they have of us, and the superhuman difficulty of grappling with them, may be at once understood by any one who reflects, for example, on the impossibility of changing the epithets applied to the month of May. It is always smiling May, the merry month, balmy May, or balmy spring, with a score of other affectionate and eulogistic terms which I affirm are scarcely ever deserved, and, indeed, are terribly inappropriate. Yet I doubt if all the king's horses, and all the king's men, will ever be able to change the conventional phrases regarding the most treacherous month in the year.

We will start—for the above was merely a parenthesis—with a department of our social life which has, at least, its fair share of conventional observance: the stage. The conventional Irishman, sailor, rustic, whether virtuous or comic, ruffian, wicked baronet, (the wicked earl is less fashionable now), all these and a host of others are known, and have their appropriate gestures, and even their appropriate voices, according to conventional propriety. Whoever expects the irascible but good-hearted uncle, who raps his stick on the stage, and feigns indignation at the extravagance of the young dog his nephew, while he is really proud of him, to speak in the same tone as the virtuous peasant, or wicked baronet? Any actor who dared to do so, although there is no reason in life why he should not, would be considered a failure—he would be flying in the face of conventional authority. The finest examples of what this unwritten tradition demands are per-

haps to be seen when a small provincial company plays one of Sheridan's comedies; say, as a very good example, *The Rivals*. It is worth while to see this, if only to note how evidently all the characters are acting to some pattern, and how utterly regardless they are as to the resemblance they may or may not bear to real life. At the same time it is evident that if there were not some standard easily reached, and which both actors and audience agreed should be accepted as equivalent to nature, the average talent of the performers must be suddenly increased, for it would then take a very clever man to fill a fifth-rate part.

There is more conventional fun got out of things that are not exactly funny, in literature, than even on the stage. The misuse of the letter "H," or its omission, will of course suggest itself to everyone, and it must be a dull article, indeed, in which the calling one of the characters 'Arry, and making him declare he is 'appy, does not carry the reader away into almost boisterous merriment; although he may have seen the same thing with scarcely a variation, five hundred times before. But even this is not a surer card to play than is to spell in full the usual prefix to a name, and write "Mister." To make the vulgar character of a book address another as Mister, or to speak of him as Mister Jawkins, at once indicates that he is vulgar, and gives the proper cue to the reader, who knows directly that he is to laugh—although how the most refined scholar who ever left Cambridge or Oxford would pronounce the word so as to show his refinement, I do not pretend to know.

One of the regular conventional pieces of humour died out about a couple of generations back—they do die, sometimes, these conventionalities, although we cannot kill them. It appears to have then been quite enough to bring in the cit, the worthy cit, especially if described as a drysalter by trade, and still better if he were a common councilman, to put the reader in good temper directly. The utter vanishing of this fun is one of the most remarkable changes of the kind I can recall.

I do not know that a readier illustration can be given of the ease with which the judgment is satisfied, when fidelity to nature is not insisted upon, than by referring to the works of two first-rate writers: Marryat and Lytton. These have never been excelled in their own walks, and yet it is amazing to note the entire lack of truth and right colouring they show when dealing with the

lower class of Londoners. Marryat has many examples; Lytton has nothing but examples whenever he touches them. Just observe how, in Paul Clifford, he makes his Cockneys say "I be" and "he be'nt."

The conventionalities of literature, as well as elsewhere, are extremely tenacious of life, although we have shown that they are not absolutely immortal, and a waggish man—who should also be a deceitful waggish man—is to this day often described as thrusting his tongue in his cheek, or answering with his tongue in his cheek; and as nobody ever takes the trouble to enquire why he should do this, I presume that the action is accepted, conventionally, as representing a waggish mood. It may be well for my readers when next they are speaking in jest, to practise this, to see what effect it will have; I have tried, but no one ever took any notice of it.

Why will so many writers still speak of the wry-necked life?—as they continually do. I don't at all know what kind of fives they may have used in Shakespeare's time, but I appeal to the evidence of our own eyes to know if anything could be less wry-necked than a fife is nowadays, and yet it is conventionally effective to allude to fives—which allusion commonly includes flutes—as wry-necked. Some other expressions are simply obsolete for every purpose but these conventional literary allusions. A black avised man is one; this has very nearly vanished as a stock phrase, however, as have others of the genus.

Perhaps the most striking literary conventionality of modern growth—and one which will doubtless be endowed with the toughness and longevity of the family—is the habit of writing as though all the readers of any given periodical, and the British nation in general, were members of fashionable clubs, shot partridges and grouse, and kept hunters. This is to me, in its popularity, at least as wonderful as any of the others that I have quoted, because the readers who really do these things must be in a very small minority, and one would think that the writing which came most home to all readers, and found most favour with them, would naturally be that which dealt with their own daily lives and habits. It would seem, however, that this is not so.

Some of our conventionalities are quaint and pleasant—although few are entitled to this praise—and one is the certainly indestructible rule that a sonnet shall have fourteen lines, neither more nor less. This

rule has been fixed, and nothing will ever alter it; so no piece of verse, whatever its form, can be a sonnet unless it has just fourteen lines.

There is one reason, however, which should prevent me from dwelling too long on the harmless peculiarities of literature, and that is, the remembrance of the proverb which tells us that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones; therefore I will leave this branch of my theme. It is not a continuation of it, but a more serious reflection, if I pause to instance one of the most unpleasant features which I can remember as having cropped up in connection with literature. "Literature" is a term having a wide range, and although we may think certain compositions disgrace the name, they are part of our literature nevertheless, and exercise their influence. In a certain largely circulated class of books, which claim to be written for boys, thieves are—more usually were—the heroes, or else boys themselves; and in the latter case these heroes are represented as doing such things, especially at school, as would stamp the actors as malignant whelps—I had almost written "fiends"—and would demand the treadmill as a corrective. Happily, this miserable school seems nearly to have had its day, and some excellent counterpoises are now found in papers which are healthy and manly in their interest. There was certainly always one comfort in reflecting that most of the feats assigned to these boy heroes were nearly or quite impossible; but for all that, the heaven thus set a-working in the minds of boys at their most impressionable age could not fail to do a great deal of mischief. I am glad this conventionality is waning, for it was a very bad one, and too serious to be confounded with the harmless peculiarities before alluded to.

That was an odd conventionality, and one which travellers of mature age must remember: the invariable offer to stage-coach travellers at starting—how well I can recall it!—of lemons, and pocket-knives with many blades. What we were supposed to want with these things at that particular moment I cannot, and never could tell; but certain it is that no stage-coach was ever allowed to depart from London without men, who were usually Jews, pushing to the door and forcing the sale of knives and lemons, the latter being carried in a net. I had better say trying to force the sale, for I cannot recollect that I ever saw anybody buy either the lemons or the knives.

If I chose to discuss the conventionalities in dress, I should have an almost exhaustless field, and should begin, quite as a matter of course, with the wigs worn by judges and barristers. I doubt if any one entering on the subject would fail to begin with these. Few people have anything to say in defence of the practice; no one ever pretended that the least real good was derived from it; yet I do not expect to see the wigs die out in my time; no, not if every wit in the nation wrote against them. The custom appeals to our conservative instincts—I do not mean politically—to our fear of change, to our love of safety, and thus the wig is held sacred. With the wig we have got on pretty well, and are satisfied with our judges; begin your alterations, take away the wig, and there is no knowing what may follow. It is a very old story.

Nor do I see any immediate chance of one coat being considered "as good as another and a great deal better," as the Irishman said, in the way of dress. Evening dress cannot be represented by a frock-coat, or a coloured tie: the more a man can make himself like the waiter who attends upon him, the more orthodox he is; and the more a waiter can make himself like the man on whom he attends, the more orthodox he is. This is a very extraordinary conventionality, but that a man in a frock-coat, and devoid of the solemn "choker" will be eligible for evening dress, I do not expect to see.

Although I had meant to say very little about dress, yet the slide from dress-coats to tall hats seems of such irresistible facility, that I cannot help touching upon the latter. Over and over again, when I was a younger man, did I believe the reign of these awkward, unpicturesque articles was over, but I was invariably disappointed; and I must in candour admit that I believe the incubus is more firmly seated upon us than ever. How firmly, a little anecdote may tell—for the truth of which I can vouch, as I knew all the persons concerned. A certain actuary of influence wishing to benefit a man of whom he had a good opinion, and who had just returned to England after a residence among certain tribes who do not recognise any conventionality beyond paint, feathers, and skins, sent him to the head of a well-known firm. This latter gentleman, was a member of parliament, and a "big chief" The clerk saw him, proved his fitness—more than twenty years of experience were to his

credit—the vacancy existed, and the chief admitted his competency; but he had seen him enter with a low felt hat, such as clergymen often wear—and this was fatal. The man was suitable in every respect; had held a post worth a thousand per annum—but he did not wear a tall hat. No one will require to be told that the very particular chief was of the parvenu order; a prince of the blood would have been less fastidious.

As for court dresses and the like, I leave them to those whom it may concern; they are not likely to cause me any inconvenience. By the same rule I leave our military uniforms to those more versed in such matters than I can pretend to be, merely saying that if we look at a series of pictures of the British soldier during the past hundred years, and bear in mind what immense talent and study have been bestowed upon the mere dressing of him, it would seem that conventionality has not been without its influence there, and that there has been a good deal of "making believe" in his case.

A reason very soon suggests itself by way of explaining why the physician's fee remains at a guinea, and why he does not recognise the simple majesty of the sovereign: his conservatism is wise enough. But how he has succeeded in emancipating himself from wigs of all kinds, while the lawyers retain them, and how he has had the courage very nearly to shake off the customary black, is a mystery. There is no mystery, however, returning to the subject of fees, about the reverence in which the proverbial "six-and-eightpence" is held: it is to the interest of all who receive these and kindred sums to support that conventionality, if no other; for once accustom their clients to free-thought in legal matters, and chaos would come again.

The most gloomy of all our social conventionalities are those which deal with sickness and death, and with the burial after death. These, indeed, are too serious for me to discuss, but they are so painful, and, to my thinking at any rate, so unnatural, that I cannot help hoping some pen will be some day found, powerful enough to banish and destroy them. Yet we are again reminded of the tenacity of life in conventionalities, by remembering how often eminent men have sought to get rid of, or change, these customs, but with very little effect at present. The greatest reform in this direction that I can recall, is the alteration in the style of widows' weeds. These are certainly less hideous than they used to be, and even that is something.

As for the stereotyped praises of wine, rosy wine, and all the routine glorification of drinking, quite as hollow and unreal as any conventionality I have quoted, I am compelled by waning space to postpone our consideration of them; a catastrophe less to be regretted as everyone must have been familiarised, not to say nauseated, with them, in almost every description of writing which dates back a few years. At present, the whole tribe of various drinks, and alcoholic beverages generally, is under a literary cloud, and it is rare to meet with the passages of spurious enthusiasm in their favour which were once so common. So with a score of social shams which clamour for notice; we must reluctantly leave them, and only hope, meanwhile, that as they have their places, they do some good, although what this good is, is not so easily discovered.

Had I chosen to meddle at full length with religious conventionality I could easily have filled my paper without touching any other subject, for no one theme in the world is infested with so many shams; but in dealing with these there would be a risk of my hurting—quite unintentionally—the feelings of better people than myself. Yet I must be allowed to say a little in commendation of a change which has nearly ridded us of one bad habit, and as I have heard credit claimed for this by those who represented high church, low church, and dissent, and as I do not intend to award the prize, I fancy it will not be unpalatable if I allude to it. We have nearly got rid of the solemn “mouthy” style in which lessons and prayers used to be read in our churches, and which was as artificial and unnatural as anything that has ever been censured on the stage. I use the expression “unnatural” purposely, for I have observed a hundred times over, in days gone by, that no matter how clear, distinct, and pleasant a voice the clergyman possessed in ordinary life, he no sooner entered his pulpit, than he sought to give weight and solemnity to his utterances by the most stilted and conventional reading which could be devised. It was impossible for a congregation to receive the idea of earnestness with such a manifestly affected delivery, yet this was conventionally correct, and was accepted as being what a duly trained clergyman should give. I am glad it has gone.

I find I have arrived at the conclusion of my article without even mentioning the department in which many persons

think some full-blown conventionalities are to be found: pictorial art. So I must pass this with only an allusion to the unaccountable style in which our artists insist upon painting their race-horses when actually racing. It has been shown, over and over again that if a race-horse, or any other horse, were “extended” in the manner nearly always shown he could not possibly rise from the position without first falling down; and as everyone who has seen the Derby, we will say, run for, allowing he had never previously seen a race, must know that horses never do stretch in their gallops in this style, one would think that no such representation could find favour. As a matter of fact, however, no other representation is accepted as showing extreme speed, and so our horses on canvas will always be shown with their legs, both fore and hind, stretched very nearly in a straight line with their bodies.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

EGOTISTICAL INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE reached that time of life when a man gets drowsy after dinner. The habit of sleeping little will cling to a traveller when the need of more rest makes itself quite perceptible, and hence arises a feeling which seemed very portentous when I first experienced it: an inclination to sit still and look at nothing for an hour. But the sensation has grown to be pleasant. My cottage is lumbered with strange objects: weapons and skins, old armour, horns, Asian carpets, works of art, outlandish furniture. In the less known parts of every continent I have gathered such things as struck my eye by beauty, or rarity, or interest. As I loll in a huge arm-chair, which bears its date betwixt two sculptured monsters on the back, “1689,” wandering fancy recalls or invents for each of these a tale. Some, of course, are simply recollections; others pure fiction; but the most part are a mingling of reality and waking dreams. Of the latter class is the story which has attached itself to the first legend of my bungalow which I transcribe, and which I shall call

A CABINET.

I shall always regret that fortune did not lead me to Bulgaria during Turkish rule. No one could be more thoroughly convinced that the sovereignty of the Porte in Europe is an anachronism and a misplacement, though to arrange the succession lies beyond my ingenuity. But I should have liked to see with my own eyes the

manner of government which is accused of transforming men like ourselves into the wretched creatures we found in Bulgaria. It will be seen that the districts whereof I write had not, in the memory of persons living, been subjected to violence or open wrong. I have no prejudices and no party spirit: Turk and Bulgar are each the same to me—a race to observe and report upon with such ability and conscience as I have. Had my eyes beheld the awful testimony which came before our ill-starred friend, Mac Gahan, I should not have been less warm than he; perhaps I should not have kept that equable and temperate spirit which he showed in friendly converse. But no atrocities were charged against the Moslem north of the Balkans. If, indeed, his ascendancy be responsible for the degradation of the Bulgar there, at least it worked by moral, or, I should say, by immoral means, not by brute force. One asked in vain for a charge of physical ill-treatment or oppression. Assuming that the Bulgar has latent in him such capacity for good works and honourable feelings as is possessed by the Russian moujik, I am sorry that the chance did not present itself of observing the system by which he has been so utterly debased.

A cabinet in my drawing-room is associated with the Russo-Turkish War—I call it a cabinet, but I am not an expert at upholstery, and this thing is my own design, set in a body of palest oak, and four doors, about two feet high by fifteen inches wide, deeply and boldly carved in a very dark wood unidentified. Above them is a row of plaques of old china; a story attaches to these also, but it has not properly a place among the legends. The interest of this piece of furniture lies in its doors, which were panels in the massive portal of the grand mufti's harem at Tirnova. It has not been my fate, up to the present, to behold the sacking of a town. I have seen villages burnt and cities bombarded, but the old-fashioned sack would be an anachronism more glaring even than the government of Turkey. The nearest approach to it which I shall probably witness was the aspect of Tirnova in the early days of July, 1877. The surroundings of the city are delightful. It hangs upon the shoulder of a hill, wooded, craggy, precipitous. A foaming, tumbling river intersects it, and the steep gorge rings all day with laughter of children bathing. A massive bridge spans the torrent, so old that the tradition of its building has been lost. From either

end narrow lanes wind upwards, or follow the ravine, amidst open stalls and houses one above another. An uncouth and filthy throng occupies the roadway; pavement there is none. In his thick jacket bound with fur, his baggy breeches, slipped bare feet, and tarboosh, the Bulgar plods along, with a sullen glance in his eyes puckered with cunning. His women toil behind, carrying the market produce or the household gear; they wear a single cotton garment, whereof the colour is dirt, and the shape lost in rags and patches. You waste your time, and if a sporting man, your cash, in guessing the age of these female creatures. Betwixt twenty and fifty years the Bulgar woman has nothing to distinguish her time of life, unless one carefully removed the layers of dirt, and counted them, as the age of a tree is estimated by its rings of growth.

Tirnova presented such a scene as is beheld after a large auction of furniture in a poor neighbourhood, but on a scale vastly greater. Half the population was engaged in transporting the property of the other half. Every member of a family assisted according to his strength. Upon his round but powerful shoulders the house father bore a load of wood-work, often carved. The sturdy mother toiled beneath a battery of cooking pots. The children carried sacks of clothing, window frames, and such light articles. I asked of them, through my interpreter, where lodgings could be had; they blankly scowled, and passed on silent. At length we met an unwholesome looking youth in European clothes, who, at the first word, came up to me and said in English: "And how are you? Fine weather! That is a nice horse; what did you give for her? How do you like Tirnova?" I politely asked him to recommend me lodgings, and he answered with a laugh: "Oh, you can take any of these Turkish houses. Tenez, there is the grand mufti's round the corner, which has a stable. You will see it on the right, a pink building. I will call presently. Good-bye now." He did call, and I saw plenty of the gentleman until we parted at Plevna. The grand duke had ordered him to join Skobelev, and his fright was pitiable. In truth, no one envied the poor fellow that journey, but lamentations would not avail him.

The house was found; a clean, even a handsome building, outside as in. The horses disposed in a humid stable, pitch dark, I climbed a broad staircase to the first, the living floor. It may be interesting to describe a Turko-Bulgar mansion of

the better class, as it was three years ago. The staircase opened in the middle of the public room, and the well thus formed was surrounded by a balustrade. All the length of the house, towards the street, had been glazed; but the casements, neatly unscrewed, had vanished. An elegant lattice-work outside kept that privacy which Turks love. This public room might be some twenty feet square, wainscoted, and surrounded by a divan eight or ten inches high and four feet broad. The ceiling was wooden, unpainted, representing as it were a sun, with rays diverging; of the same pattern were most ceilings I observed. Not a stick of furniture remained; there was not a rag on the divans; but wall, wood, floor, were clean as a platter newly scrubbed. Two doors on either side led to a suite of apartments panelled with simple but effective carvings, provided with divans and innumerable cupboards in the wainscot. These stood open and bare. The very stoves had been wrecked, and the floor of every room was covered six inches deep with wool—the stuffing of divans and cushions ripped up in the search for treasure, and gutted for convenience of folding the embroidery of the outer cases. The sanitary arrangements, the bath, and kitchen, were excellent in their way.

I never found more comfortable quarters. For the first time since crossing the Danube my rest was not disturbed by vermin. But still I was not happy. The closest examination of localities, the deepest study of the building, did not reveal to me the grand mufti's harem. What is a Turkish house destitute of a harem? An imposition and a fraud! It was possible, of course, that the grand mufti had been a bachelor; but even in that case he would no more build a house destitute of the gynæceum than would a British teetotaller suppress the cellarage. But he was not a bachelor. In calling upon Archibald Forbes, who lived down the street, his landlady assured me that my absent host had at least one wife. The search was renewed, still vainly. Beside the mansion lay a garden, surrounded by high walls, too damp and shaded as I thought for flowers; but the Moslem horticulturist had contrived to keep a pretty show. This pleasure apparently could not be entered direct from the house. A substantial gateway opened on the street, but I found no door on my side. This fact deterred me from exploring; besides, the only edifice there seemed to be a shed, full of rubbish and broken tools, along the far

side. One day, however, I perceived a narrow crevice behind the stove, scarcely a foot in width, and evidently a semi-secret passage—corridor it could not be named. Squeezing through this fissure, I reached daylight at a slit above the garden. In former times, doubtless, there had been a ladder here, but it was absent. Warning my servants, I dropped to earth, and crossed towards the shed.

By accident or design the grand mufti had concealed his harem with extraordinary skill. It had not escaped plunder, of course. There would be women in the town who knew where to look for it, and whose earliest foray would be in this direction; but little or no damage had been done by the looters, who contented themselves with carrying off every rag and stick about the premises, saving two or three little worthless caps and shoes. The shed beneath was just what I had fancied, but very much deeper. Old casks and pack-saddles, worn-out pots and tools, straw, boxes and bottles, almost filled it; but a passage was clear to the foot of a staircase, which mounted to the zenana. Its solid door stood open, betwixt posts and lintels handsomely carved. Inside them was a number of small low rooms, a bath with stove and water-tank, and a kitchen. I wonder if the maids quarrelled over the use of that very simple cooking apparatus! In form it was just like those found in Pompeian houses, and in principle it resembled the ovens which our sepoy's build so quickly and so easily on campaign. Upon a solid bench of clay little partitions had been raised, and the charcoal lay in them, dead and dusty. My most careful search of the abandoned chambers revealed no loot. Pretty and comfortable they had been, when the naked divans were covered and the curtains hung at window and door. I found one of the large iron rings in place, and holes whence others had been wrenched. From this harem very likely came the satin trousers, superbly brodered at waist and ankle, the muslin jackets worked with silver, and the beautiful handkerchiefs, which a Russian offered me for sale outside the town. The grand mufti had escaped with three carts, but they would not hold all his family and treasures.

Children had lived here; that was certain. Besides the evidence of those little caps and shoes, I found a pile of writing copies and "sums" upon a shelf, and a heap of letters. It would seem that Turkish dames resemble others of their sex in a passion

for correspondence. I knew that a quantity had been removed, probably for translation, since the shed beneath and the way to the garden entrance were littered with them; but a large quantity remained, and I gathered a few of those which seemed most likely to be interesting; it does not dwell in my memory, however, that I did anything with them. Almost every Turkish house, here as elsewhere, contained exercises in writing and arithmetic. Education is valued by Mahomedans, but circumstances rarely permit it to be carried far. As to letters, the streets of Sistof, Tirnova, Selvie, and all places where the Turk had dwelt, were dotted with them for weeks after the exodus.

With a covetous longing I admired the carved panels of the harem door. In fancy I saw them made into some such piece of furniture as that which now adorns my bungalow, and I knew that they would infallibly be burnt if not removed. But housebreaking is not an idea which readily enters the well-disciplined mind. One has no scruple in appropriating a souvenir that lies loose and abandoned of an owner who can never be discovered; but to break doors is another thing somehow. Bad examples, however, are contagious. A dozen times a day I was disturbed by the visit of foraging parties. They now carried tools, and the pretty woodwork of my quarters rapidly vanished. Many of the plundering gangs were wholly composed of women, or, I would rather say, beings of the female sex. I remember one droll instance of this sort. Some dozen granddams clad in nameless rays entered where I was writing. It should have been remarked that there was a loft above the public room; I never thought it worth exploring. My table, as it chanced, was set just opposite to the ladder, not unhandsome, which led to this portion of the building. I did not interfere with the proceedings of these ancient dames, who had the same right of admittance as myself. But they interfered with me. Gesticulating and screaming, they surrounded my table, and I might have taken them for avenging spirits. My interpreter was not present, and it occupied a time long enough to make me irritable before I guessed the cause of their excitement. Not unused to the language of signs, it gradually dawned upon my intellect that these hideous old persons objected to pursue their burglarious intentions up aloft whilst I sat twenty feet away with my back to them, writing. I trust I

have as great regard for propriety as most gentlemen, but experience has taught me that savages delight in teasing, overawing, and generally giving trouble to the civilised man. Therefore, in pantomime as intelligible as their own, I told them that I would not move, that it was utterly indifferent to me whether or not they climbed the ladder, and that I had more important things on hand than their tiresome impertinence. So the eldest one of the crew—she was eighty, if a day—stood in front of me whilst the others bound their skirts with rope. It is needless to say that I did not look round.

Russian officers advised me, with a laugh, to take and keep the panels, if I pleased; but for awhile instinct revolted. At length, one of these wandering gangs broke into my garden, which had hitherto been sacred. A family it was—man, wife, and several ugly youngsters. They had already picked up some dozen window-sashes and carved boards, which they carefully disposed against the wall before mounting to the harem. I could stand it no longer. The husband was apparently a carpenter; at least, he carried certain weird and mystic implements, of shape, I imagine, unchanged since Byzantine days. This hireling was set to work, and in half an hour he brought me the panels, received a rouble, and departed, carrying off the "balance" of the door. For awhile I was rather ashamed of my trophy; but, as no one seems to think the worse of me, my feelings have grown callous. One reconciles oneself to anything, even burglary. And the grand mufti himself would be consoled, too, observing how fine his carvings look.

And now to the legend. Poking about one day, in the back part of the main dwelling, I found a bath chamber which had hitherto escaped notice; you understand that my quarters covered a large space. It had a cupboard, untouched by the spoiler, which was full of dry bloody rags and bandages. Closer examination showed dark stains upon the floor, and I conjectured that a person grievously wounded had lain there bleeding whilst his hurts were dressed. It has been mentioned that the Bulgarian dame with whom Forbes lodged had some knowledge of the mufti. This we discovered by her recital of a long-winded grievance, whereof all that I remember is the fact that it somehow concerned a distillery. The mufti had wronged her, and she said he was a

wicked old man; not very, very wicked for a Turk, but a villain of the deepest dye compared with Christians.

I told this matron of the discovery, and she said at once: "His son must have reached home after all. Fancy that! The proud youth went to join Suliman Pasha, as soon as it was known that he was advancing from Montenegro. He took with him more than a hundred volunteers from this city. Paulovitch, the priest, went after him, and it was said that he killed every one in the Balkans. I suppose Ibrahim escaped. If our people had known he was in the house, they would have torn it brick from brick, when the Russians crossed the Danube."

"Was he more wicked than his father, then?"

"I don't know that. But he rode about on his horses, dressed in fine blue cloth, with embroideries and scarves and yataghans and what not, looking down at the Bulgars as if they were dirt."

I thought to myself that an inability to distinguish between the substantive "dirt" and the adjective "dirty" was not an offence deserving death.

"Was he handsome?" I asked.

"I suppose so, for a Turk! He made eyes at any girl so irreligious as to look at him. But without his feathers, the peacock is blacker than the crow." These words seemed to be directed at little Sitza, who was in our company. She blushed, but that proved nothing, for it was her habit.

Sitza had a tongue, and she answered sharply: "You talk nonsense, mother! Girls can't walk blindfold. Ibrahim Effendi made eyes at none of us. He just rode to and from his father's house, and if one was in the street, of course one saw him. What kind of unnatural monsters will these English gentlemen think us? There is no girl in Tirnova who would willingly have looked at an infidel." Little Sitza was about the only girl at whom an infidel would willingly have looked. She washed.

"Well, well," replied the mother; "when Heaven sends a curse, it is useless to shut one's eyes. I will enquire about that action in the Balkans. Depend upon it, Ibrahim escaped, for the mufti would have opened his doors to no one else."

From what the old lady gathered, it appears that this band of Turkish youths set out to cross the mountains about a week before the Russians invaded Bulgaria. Why they did not use the Shipka Pass it is vain to speculate. There was still a large

force at Gabrova, and the road was strongly held. The rush of fugitives had begun, but a great majority of the Mahomedan people lingered until news came of the forcing of the Danube. The Turks, who seem so indifferent to Christian progress and civilisation, are sufficiently acute to know that theirs is a hopeless cause. Habit has used them to defeat, and, if they struggle bravely, it is without faith in ultimate success. Prophets differ as to the time when mass will again be celebrated in St. Sophia, but no Turk doubts that his creed must ultimately vanish—from Europe, that is. The public opinion of Mahomedan countries which do not march with Christian is very different. The Afghans, for instance, with all their shrewdness of local insight, know nothing of the general condition of the world, and they think, of course, that Islam runs as good a chance as any creed of conquering the earth. The Turks, better instructed, fled as soon as Russia threatened them on their own side the river. This does not mean that all Christianity in arms would have daunted the gallant soldiers of the crescent. I am perfectly satisfied that the aforesaid mass will not be sung till streams of blood have flowed. But it accounts for the exodus of peaceful Moslem from Bulgaria.

Ibrahim Effendi and his comrades proposed to use the Hankoi Pass, shortly to be traversed by the raiding force of General Ghorka. Their intention could not be kept secret, and Paulovitch led out his band to intercept them. Swelled by fanatical volunteers, they outnumbered the Turks, but their arms were inferior, and, man for man, they would not have stood a chance. It might reasonably be thought, however, that with the advantage of surprise, of position, and of the loss caused by a volley at close quarters, they would rout the enemy. Paulovitch laid his ambush half-way up the pass and waited. Late in the afternoon a considerable force was seen advancing, and the Bulgars recognised with alarm a strong Turkish patrol, horse and foot. The Turks still lay at Elena, but it was not their habit to explore the roads at night. Paulovitch had no design of open fighting. He saw that the enterprise was discovered, and guessed the informer. In gloomy silence, cherishing revenge, the Bulgars slipped away, easily escaping notice in the woods and gullies. And lo! just as darkness set in, the traitor was delivered into their hands.

The priest declares that this was the Lord's doing, and all Tirnova accepts his pious view of things with acclamation. For my own part, I believe that even a Turk who saves from massacre his unoffending countryman and his bosom friend is not condemned by Heaven. This so-called traitor was a harmless Moslem of Elena, personally attached to Ibrahim Effendi. From a commanding rock, himself unseen apparently, he had watched the Bulgars pass, and had hastened to warn both the victims and the commandant. Returning from this errand, he fell in with the savage priest and his followers. They offered him life if he would confess what by-path Ibrahim had taken, and I am sorry to admit that the terms were accepted. Yet, it may be, if these lonely woods could tell their secret, we should marvel and shudder at the heroism of this poor wretch. But he gave way; and then the Bulgars "cut him up like a lamb," as one of their fellows boasted to my interpreter at Sistof. So they went rejoicing on their way.

There was still time to intercept the Moslems, who had halted long at the hour of prayer. The moon gave light enough for climbing the Balkan steeps, which most of these men, half-brigand, half-smuggler, could have traversed blindfold. Before midnight they had reached a shadowy spot well suited for their purpose. If the Turks had not escaped them they must soon arrive. Paulovitch divided his men, posting half on either side the road, where, in the gloom of trees and cliffs, an army might have passed them unawares. Scarcely were they stationed when a ring of hoofs on stone, faintly echoing up the hill, announced the enemy's approach. The Turks marched carelessly, some on horseback, some on foot, in broken groups. Ibrahim was recognised among the foremost riders, conspicuous for the beauty of his steed and the sheen of his gold-worked scarf, which glittered in the moonlight. The Bulgars thrilled to look upon their prey; for the greater number of Turks had snatched this opportunity to transport some of their valuables, and their packs were heavy. It was too great a temptation. Before the word was given the party occupying one flank discharged a volley. Many Turks dropped, but the survivors, undismayed, charged furiously into the gloom. The Bulgars could not face that onset. Those who stood their ground were cut to pieces, but the majority fled. Panic-stricken by this change of rôles, the

ambush occupying the other flank turned without a shot, and in the excitement of the victorious Turks no one perceived the commotion of this rout. With voice and blows Paulovitch rallied them and brought them back after some minutes. They found the enemy engaged in dragging out the corpses, which they recognised with savage glee, or attending to their wounded fellows. Presently all gathered in a group around the pile of severed heads. The Bulgars could not miss that target, and, at the sharp command of Paulovitch, they fired point-blank into the throng. The Turks fell in one struggling mass. Not a score remained upright, and they, after an instant's pause of stupefaction, sprang off and disappeared. Ibrahim shouted and implored in vain. He sat upon his plunging horse till the Christians rushed on him from the wood; then, doubled over the pommel, he went full gallop down the hill. Half-a-dozen of the bravest Bulgars followed. No horse could thread that path at speed, and when the pursuers returned to claim their portion of the booty, carrying the blood-stained scarf which Ibrahim had worn, no one doubted their victorious tale. But, if the young hero fell, whose were the gory bandages I discovered in his father's house?

For myself I hope and believe that he escaped. No offence was laid against him worse than manly beauty, a love of horses and becoming dress. If these be crimes, in what a perilous state is the youth of Britain! This I honestly and solemnly declare, that if Ibrahim Effendi appeared to claim the familiar panels which shielded his mother and his sisters, he should have them, cabinet and all—that is, if he had the heart to rob me.

THE HUGUENOTS IN THE CALAISIS.

READERS of English history should possess a good map, easily obtainable, of the Department of France called the Pas-de-Calais, from the "pas" or "strait" (our Straits of Dover) which separates England from the continent of Europe. A small portion of this department, lying immediately round Calais, and thence named the Calaisis, long held under English rule, has been the scene of so many eventful circumstances as to excite enquiring residents in those localities to search out what the past has to tell them respecting the many curious facts which it has witnessed.

Amongst those students of by-gone times and changed topography, one of the ablest and most persevering is Dr. Victor Cuisinier, an accomplished medical practitioner of Saint-Pierre-lez-Calais, who lightens the weight of his professional duties by tracing strange events and the spots where they occurred in the neighbourhood of his adopted home, without confining himself to one particular class of events or any limited period of time. It is evident that, in pursuing such researches, an immense mass of documents has been accumulated. Those which concerned the doings and sufferings of the Huguenots very naturally attracted the attention of a Protestant clergyman, M. le Pasteur Gallien, who begged the use of them to furnish materials for a "conference" on the fortunes of Protestantism in the Calaisais.

"Conference" is one of many instances of the same word bearing different meanings in two languages. In English, it is a meeting of two or more persons for the purpose of mutual consultation, an exchange of opinion, a parley. In French, it is an assemblage of many persons to hear one person, the conferencier, speak; a lecture, in short. At the end of the lecture, those of the audience who wish to do so may be permitted to ask questions or express their own views, as with us. But, during the conference, the speaker announced has, or ought to have, it all his own way, without interruption.

M. Gallien soon discovered that the right person to give the conference was not himself, but the collector of the data on which it was to be founded. Dr. Cuisinier accordingly was persuaded to delight an attentive audience with a sketch of what their forefathers had passed through in days now happily ended. From the speaker's notes confided to us, we are enabled to show what an interesting page of history still remains to be added to our annals.

When our Edward the Third took possession of Calais, and treated Eustache de Saint-Pierre and his companions in the way related in the well-known anecdote, all Europe was Roman Catholic. The same was the case in 1529, the date of the famous interview of the camp-du-drap-d'or, the Field of the Cloth of Gold, on the plain lying between Guines and Ardres, at which English Henry the Eighth and French Francis the First swore an eternal alliance, which lasted six months. Anne Boleyn was also present. But men's minds were then beginning to ferment about weightier matters than royal love fits.

Luther's denunciations, and the scandal of the sale of indulgences by Rome, had produced their natural effects. Henry, still a good Catholic, declared himself Luther's staunch opponent. But it happened that, after repudiating two wives, he wanted to treat one wife more in the same shabby way, in order to marry Anne. The pope refusing to grant Bluebeard a third divorce, he renounced his old faith and imposed the reformed religion on England and the Calaisais, where it was heartily accepted; for the breath of the Reformation was blowing strongly from the opposite and neighbouring shore.

English rule had infected the whole Calaisais with heresy. The Huguenots held fast to their adopted faith and to the people from whom they had received it. After the reconquest by the Duc de Guise, and the restoration of Calais to Catholicism, the pestilence of religious disobedience had to be thoroughly stamped out. If English Mary, renouncing her father's errors and forbidding people to pray for his repose after death, had been busily striving to save her own soul by burning Protestant bodies alive, that of an archbishop included, Holy Church could hardly suffer them to dwell in peace on the truly orthodox side of the Channel. The schism from Rome, in England, had set the example of schism in France. Anglomania and disbelief were deemed to be inseparable. In 1563 a conspiracy to restore the town to the English was discovered in Calais. Thirty conspirators were arrested and hung at the windows of the Hotel de Ville. Leclerc, the sheriff, at the head of the plot, contrived to get away, and flight in those days was more difficult than now; but, on the other hand, pursuit and capture were more difficult also.

The word Huguenot, applied to Lutherans, Calvinists, and other seceders from the Church, was meant to be a term of reproach and insult. Whence derived, and what it means, are not so certain. Some trace it to Eidgenoss, confederate, associate, ally, contracted to Egnot, and subsequently corrupted or distorted, after French fashion, into Huguenot. The etymology may pass if no better is forthcoming.

After the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, on the 24th of August, 1572, two very memorable religious measures had an enormous influence on the history of their times. So widely-spread were their effects, that we have only to peruse the records of

one district, like the Calaisis, or even of one small country town, like Guines, to appreciate the sum total of the results produced.

The first of these was the Edict of Nantes, signed in the old château of that city by Henri Quatre, in 1598, for the protection of the Protestants. Henri himself cruelly expiated his liberal act. Damiens killed him for having caused the death of the chief of the "Ligue;" and Pope Sixtus the Fifth declared that assassination to be comparable, in its influence on the salvation of the world, to the incarnation of the Saviour. But, notwithstanding the papal verdict, the nation immediately felt the good effects of the edict. The security thus promised to the most intelligent, enquiring, and industrious part of the population gave an ever-increasing impulse to the commercial and manufacturing prosperity of the kingdom.

Many priests even turned Protestant. In 1579, the Protestants had already obtained permission to build a so-called "temple" at Guines; so-called by their enemies. It was not built till several years afterwards. At Marck, about three miles from Calais on the Gravelines road, the temple, built in 1563, was burnt down by the Spaniards in 1641. After that, the Guines temple became the centre of Huguenotism for Flanders and the Artois, until Harbeville had it demolished by the Spaniards in 1673. The street where it stood still retains the name of Rue du Temple, by which name it was referred to by notary's acts dated 1606.

What is in a name? Often a great deal. Throughout Roman Catholic France, to this very day, a Protestant place of worship is not allowed to be a church, an ecclesia, a consecrated building; for its consecration by a Protestant bishop is null, a ceremony void of meaning or efficacy. The house where Protestants meet to pray and preach is a temple, which might be the resort of pagans: a heathen assembly-hall, whose pretensions to any religious character are only accorded (by true believers) through polite forbearance.

The second measure, the very reverse of the first both in spirit and in consequences, was the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis the Fourteenth, in October, 1685, to which he was persuaded by Madame de Maintenon and her priestly advisers, as an expiation of his private peccadilloes. The Huguenots were chosen as the scapegoats who were to carry the

monarch's sins into the wilderness; but instead of this, they enriched neighbouring nations with their own special virtues and intelligence. In 1673, the number of those who, anticipating persecution, crossed over to England, was sufficiently considerable to make the deputies of Calais at the synod of Charenton declare that they were overwhelmed by them. The whitewashing of Louis the Fourteenth's conscience was destined to cost poor France very dear.

Darwin attributes the decadence of Spain to the Holy Inquisition's having selected, with extreme care, the freest and boldest men to burn or imprison. The brightest intellects—those who doubted and questioned; and without doubting there can be no progress—were thus eliminated during three centuries at the rate of a thousand a year. In France, the same causes threatened to produce the same effects. In 1689, Marshal Vauban said that commerce was at a standstill, and that France would be ruined unless they recalled the Huguenots. But the bishops, anti-Protestant to the backbone, would not consent.

After their signal triumph, it was not likely that they should; for the revocation did not do things by halves. It revoked, as if they had never existed, all edicts of tolerance obtained by the Huguenots; ordained the demolition of all temples that still existed; prohibited the heresy of the Reformed Protestant Religion; exiled, under pain of the galleys, all preachers who refused to be converted; abolished all schools of the reformed religion; baptised all Protestant children, and brought them up in the true Catholic faith; granted four months to refugees to return and abjure their errors, otherwise, confiscation. Nevertheless, while abolishing their worship, the edict allowed the Protestants to retain their liberty of conscience in private, until it should please Heaven to enlighten them. Louis the Fourteenth was much congratulated on his goodness—manifested by sending missionaries, accompanied by soldiers, to effect the conversion of misbelievers.

But before the edict was actually revoked—it had already been completely sapped and mined by a host of decrees which pretended to interpret it—in the preamble of the revocation it was stated: "The execution of the Edict of Nantes is useless, because, in consequence of our exertions, almost all those professing the Reformed Protestant Religion have already

abjured it"—which was quite untrue. At the revocation, however, there remained in the whole Department of the Somme only one temple, namely, that of Abbeville.

The Huguenots would also have had good reason for not responding to any invitation to return. On the 24th of May, 1686, there went forth a declaration of the king, condemning to the galleys for life all sick Protestants who should recover after having refused the viaticum. In case of death, their bodies were to be dragged on a hurdle and thrown on a muck-heap. At Calais, the bodies of Samuel Doye, Jean de Lamarre, and Michel Poirée, underwent that treatment. The executioner, ashamed of his task, ran away. So strong, in short, was the universal disgust, that the declaration was modified in 1687 and abolished in 1699.

Notwithstanding this, Protestants fled from the kingdom, abandoning their property. Escape even was not always easy. One Daniel de la Balle, gardener to the Sieur de Becquigny, was condemned to the galleys for having assisted his master to embark and get away. From the "governments" only of Calais and Ardres two hundred and fourteen individuals departed, the sale of whose houses and lands produced eight thousand four hundred and fifty-six livres. According to Bignon, before the revocation there were in those governments three thousand families, of whom only three hundred remained. For, as early as 1534, all the Calaisis followed the reformed religion. Its reconquest in 1558 restored to Catholic France a territory which, in company with England, had become Protestant for the last thirty years. Religious reaction and repression immediately followed the restoration. Mass, hitherto said in only four villages, was re-established everywhere; permitting, however, "le prêche"—sermon, or Protestant worship—at Marck.

On the 29th of June, 1562, at Amiens, a soldier named Jacques Beron returned from Calais, and, recognised as a Protestant, was thrown into the river and there stoned to death. In the same city, six days previously, domiciliary visits were made in Protestant houses, commencing with that of the minister Laforet—which same Laforet, before going to Amiens, had already exercised pastoral functions at Calais and Caen, and afterwards at Dieppe. In fact, Picardy fills a considerable place in the history of French Protestantism. In July, 1682, the king charged Breteuil de Bavai, the

intendant of Picardy, to "travailler" or set to work on the Huguenots. For six months he hesitated. To set his mind at ease, they sent him the report of what had been done at Charenton, near Paris, in execution of the king's orders. According to this document, the Pastor Claude's answer was not unfavourable. Its object was to encourage the intendant; but they went no further than to ask him to proceed to Guines, and to Hautcourt, near St. Quentin. Whether he fulfilled his ungrateful task or not, we are left in ignorance.

The final article of the revocation said that professors of the reformed religion might continue to reside in France on condition of not practising their religion, under penalties of body and goods. Many acceded to the terms. But on November 5, 1655, Louvois wrote to Chauvelin, intendant of Picardy: "I find you perceive that the last article of the new edict issued against the religionnaires slackens their conversion, but apparently not to a considerable extent. The arrival of troops will make them change their language." Doctor Debonningues, of Guines, wrote that not a few Protestants who concealed their faith still remained there. "Sixty years ago, their fathers ventured to be present at the sermons only of their worship, announced by the sound of a bell. The sermon ended, they lost no time in making themselves scarce, on account of the credo"—which would compromise them—"probably."

When the instigators of the revocation had attained their object, they naturally set about reaping its fruits. Moreover, while extirpating every trace of Protestantism, they turned its ruins to good account. The materials of the temple and of the minister's house at Guines were given by the king to build an additional wing to the Catholic church of that town. Besides this, an income amounting to two hundred livres belonging to it was made over to the Calais hospital. The curé of St. Pierre-lez-Calais asked for the Protestant cemetery, which lay within the bounds of the commune, to be occupied as the site of a school there, and also for moneys proceeding from the fugitives' goods to aid in the construction of the building. The proceeding was far-seeing and radical. Living, the Protestants were to have neither place of worship nor home for their pastor; dead, no burial-ground wherein to lie. Where the carcass of Protestantism was, the

vultures gathered. And we may assume that these local instances of intolerance were samples of the spirit which the victorious party manifested throughout the land.

The crime of the Huguenots which caused their persecution was, not that they were godless and irreligious, but that they proclaimed the religion of Rome to be corrupt. Had they been merely indifferent and silent, they might have been suffered to entertain their opinions undisturbed; but, as they made war on superstitions and venality, setting up simpler and purer forms of worship in their stead, they were therefore to be crushed out of existence, until not a trace of them should be left.

Of the violent struggle between the two opposing faiths, sundry curious proofs remain. A certificate (1604), stating that such-a-one does not go to the *prêche* of the R.P.R. (religion prétendue réformée), is given as a sort of testimonial of good conduct. In the same year, an apprentice is bound, but his indentures are to be cancelled if any attempt is made to induce him to turn Huguenot. A Pihen woman belonging to the R.P.R. wills not to be buried there, but to have her body interred in the cemetery of her co-religionists at Guines. A house at Balinghem (Field of the Cloth of Gold), where there are too many Huguenots, is to let (1606), provided the tenant do not belong to the R.P.R. A marriage celebrated (1610), after due publication, in the Guines temple, attracts by its importance and boldness an immense concourse of people. In 1612, Bishop Blaseur, of St. Omer, has four men from the environs of Lille arrested, two going to, and two returning from, worship conducted by Protestant ministers at Guines. Consequences, *amende honorable en chemise*, blazing torch in hand, abjuration, public profession of the true religion. Very prolix statistics of the Guines population (1658) mention the religious quality of each individual. Many last wills and testaments give money or lands to the poor of the R.P.R., or to the community, or for keeping the temple in repair; the testators often requiring to be buried in the Protestant cemetery. The fancied security of the Huguenots, before the revocation, is evidenced by the sale (1670) of a bench in the temple. But when once the revocation was effected, the priestly party lost no time in setting matters to rights. The very day after, namely, on the 23rd October, 1685, Bishop Claude Letonnellier went to Guines: one result of which

possibly was that, on the 28th of the same month, a baptism was celebrated "*par ordre du roi*." People were no longer allowed to fancy that their souls, or their children's souls, were their own.

It will not be supposed that all Huguenots had the courage to hold fast by their purified form of Christianity. Many abjured, in order to contract marriage according to the ancient rite; others catholicised their Protestant marriage for the sake of standing well with the dominant power. Fugitives, returned from England, abjured, in the hope of living in peace and quiet in France; others were converted under pressing influence brought to bear upon them on their death-beds; others wished to avoid all controversy with soldiers sent forth with orders to act energetically as religious missionaries and propagandists. Nevertheless, the great majority of the faithful remained firm. One of the historical things generally known is, that before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the major part of the inhabitants of Guines made profession of the R.P.R.; that they had a temple there, and so on. But after October, 1685, Guines was almost depopulated by the flight of the *religionnaires*. It was impossible to find a sufficient number of individuals capable of filling the municipal offices; and the whole body corporate of the town was reduced to one single *maire* or *mayer*.

Times have changed—no thanks, however, to the spirit which revoked the Edict of Nantes. It still exists, the same in its aims, although so shorn of its power to kill men's bodies as to be even obliged to submit, on the actual scene of the original tragedy, to an operatic representation of murderous *poignards* blessed by priestly zeal, and to a mimic massacre of revolted followers set to music composed by a Jew. The libretto of *Les Huguenots* was a bold thing to write in the capital city of a Roman Catholic country. For, thrice vanquishing all foes at every stage-performance, and thrice slaying the slain, ought to be anything but an agreeable reminder to the successors of the *bonâ fide* assassins.

From the above-recited historical facts, Dr. Cuisinier concludes that the intervention of religion in politics has always proved calamitous. State crimes have too often been instigated by the partisans of religious intolerance. There have always been found men ready to attribute them to the Divine will, and to vaunt them as conducive to the glorification of the Deity. If something

within us were not stronger than all the fanaticisms in the world we should speedily become utterly void of a moral sense of right or wrong. We, therefore, who have successfully struggled to free ourselves from religious intolerance—at least before the law, whatever may take place socially—we English cannot wonder at our neighbours' endeavours to checkmate a power which, if you drive it out of doors with a pitchfork, will soon afterwards fly in at the window, or, if the back-stairs are closed to it, will gain readmission by creeping down the cellar.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXXII. THE ACQUITTAL.

"We admit the fairness of your correction," said the president, "and also of your rebuke. When we discover that we have wronged you, we shall make acknowledgment of the wrong."

"I expect no less," said Ranf; "there are those present whose good opinion I desire."

"Not mine, surely," thought Harold. "He takes high ground, this twisted mortal."

"Proceed now to your defence," said the president.

"Nay," said the hunchback, "it is first for you to state of what I am accused."

"It is stated on the summons. You are accused of harbouring a woman of the isle."

"To the hurt of the honour of the isle, unless I mistake."

"It is so."

"Does not my form answer you? Look well upon me. Is it likely that I could ever win a woman's love?"

"He can read the minds of men," thought Harold. "A woman's love! Hard to gain. But we live in an age of miracles!"

"That is not the question," said the president; "strange tales are told, and strange ideas held by many concerning you, although you may rest assured that we, your judges, place but little value upon idle rumour."

"I am glad to know it. If it be proved that I, with no unworthy intent, have given shelter to the unfortunate, how shall I stand in your eyes?"

"Acquitted, and entitled to our gratitude. The laws of humanity, administered with a pure intent, are sacred."

"So do I regard them; and a man's ungraceful shape and uncouth manners should not tell against him. Justice is blind; she sees not whether a man be rich

or poor, crooked or straight. Despite your assurance, I am impelled by my experiences to warn you to be careful that you are not led away by the prejudice which exists against me. I have heard some of the tales and ideas you speak of, and have laughed at them, wondering, too, that they should have gained a hold upon the men of the Silver Isle, who pride themselves upon their common sense and reason. But it proves you human—and fallible. The woman of the isle whom I am accused of harbouring, to her dishonour, stands by my side. Do not forget that in this accusation you are flinging a shameful stone upon one of yourselves; if it strike her it wounds her not, for it touches not her honour; it recoils upon those who accuse her. If upon this isle there is a home despoiled by me, the particulars of the deed could scarcely be hidden from you. Know you of a man who mourns the loss of wife or daughter, and cries to you for justice on the wronger?"

"We know of no such man."

"How vague, then, is the charge you bring against me! You make me a witness against myself. If I am guilty, I must bring my own guilt to light. You shall not say of me that I thwart the course of justice."

With his own hand he removed the scarlet cloak and hood from the woman at his side, and Bertha stood revealed. They gazed at her in surprise, and then at Daniel Christof in compassion; but of them all he was the one man among them who was unmoved. His eyes rested on his daughter's face without a sign of love or recognition. She met his gaze mournfully, but did not move towards him. She was strangely and beautifully dressed in laces, silks, and jewels of great value. Bracelets of pearls were on her arms, and a diamond cross at her neck. None of these ornaments were new; they all bore upon them the stamp of an old fashion. The only motion she made was to raise the cross to her lips, and keep it there for a little while in one long clinging kiss.

Harold scrutinised her with curiosity. "A fair woman," he thought; "beautiful once, beautiful now, and most wonderfully attired. The court of a king could show nothing finer. That expression of sorrow in her eyes is native to her; she has seen trouble." Harold was puzzled and interested. For a moment an idea had occurred to him that the woman might be Evangeline, but a glance dispelled the

mingled dread and hope. He continued his musings: "Ranf has come well prepared. His plot is a succession of surprises. Already has he turned the tables upon his judges. Those jewels and laces are his. How did he obtain possession of them? Is there a fairy palace in the Silver Isle?"

"Here," said Ranf, "is the woman I am said to have wronged. Whom have I robbed? A father of his child? Let him take her to his breast."

As he spoke these words he looked straight into the face of Daniel Christof, and advanced a step towards him.

Daniel Christof rose slowly from his seat.

"I have no child," he said, in a cold, passionless voice.

"This woman's name," said Ranf, "is Bertha Christof."

"Bertha Christof is dead," said Daniel Christof, in the same metallic tone.

"It is false!" retorted Ranf; "she lives, and stands before you."

"It matters not. I have no child."

"Had such a crime as this," said Ranf, addressing the elders, "been laid at my door—had an innocent being of my own blood, to whom I owed a duty of love and gentle guidance, been by me thrust from her home, and I was called upon to answer the desertion—I should have humbled myself before you, and without one word in self-defence have called upon you to pass judgment upon me. You are welcome to entertain what harsh thoughts you please against me; I can bear them. But when you point the finger of shame at an innocent being who cannot defend herself, whose sensitive soul shrinks at an unkind word, you proclaim yourselves, unless you make full atonement, devoid of chivalry, religion, and grace. Such a crime as lies upon that old man's soul lies not upon mine, and I am not called upon to answer it. My crime is that I have held out the hand of friendship, that I have given the word of sympathy, to a forsaken woman, whose kith and kin would have left her to starve."

"That is not true," said the president, sternly; "no living creature need starve in this land of plenty. The guiltiest can obtain food for the asking."

"Pardon me," retorted Ranf, with a fine irony, "I forgot myself. I thought for a moment that other food than bread was needed for life and reason; that to a delicately nurtured woman some mark of sympathy, some word of gentleness, some look of kindness, were a necessity of her being—the want of which can only be

supplied by a merciful dispensation which deprives her of her wits. That is the good fortune which has overtaken Bertha Christof; she is not full-witted, and has but one hope in this world or the next—a hope that lies in the grave of a child. To whom, then, is she responsible, and to whom am I? If she is no man's daughter, I have wronged no man, even were I guilty of a wrong, which I am not. In years gone by you passed judgment upon this woman. Question now your hearts as to the justice of the punishment you meted out to her."

"We have our laws," said the president; "the woman sinned."

"She did not sin; she erred, being a weak, trusting woman, and in this respect your laws are cruel and merciless. Before the man whose child she is lay a straight path of merciful duty. Her mother, as Daniel Christof knows—you see now why I called him here to-day, although the whole of my purpose is not yet disclosed—was yielding, gentle, and timorous."

"We would have you remember," interrupted the president, in a gentle tone, "that the man you summoned here from his life of solitude has already suffered much."

"And I would have you remember that the woman you summoned here from her lonely life has suffered a martyrdom. My pity is for the weak, not for the strong; for the innocent, not for the guilty. Bertha's mother was a woman whose plastic mind was ready to receive, without question, the law of right and wrong from the lips of those she loved. That she had neither wisdom nor strength was Nature's doing. She died young, but not before she had transmitted her weakest qualities to a daughter, whose heart and mind are not of the Spartan order. As well blame me for my shape as Bertha Christof for faith and tenderness. But I forget again; you have done the one; avoid, then, the other injustice. This faith and this tenderness were sufficient to destroy the happiness of her life. What was done? Was balm poured upon her wounds? No; those who should have comforted her stricken soul heaped fire upon her, and added shame to shame. You cast her out from among you; her father drove her from her home. And this was justice! You pray in your churches that you shall not be led into temptation, and you strike with a merciless hand the woman who was so innocently led, and was not endowed with strength to resist. By

accident I met her. When? Years ago, at midnight. Where? In the great market-place of the isle in which the statue of Evangeline is set up. A strange time and a strange place for such a meeting, seeing what it has led to."

He paused, and looked first at Margaret Sylvester and then at Harold. His action had the effect of drawing the attention of Margaret and Harold, each upon the other; it was as if he were the link between the two, to draw them together, or keep them apart.

"Decidedly," thought Harold, "the hunchback is a clever comedian, and has scenes in the background from which, when the time suits him, he will draw the curtain. Does he intend that I shall play an active part in his comedy?"

"It may be a satisfaction to you," said the president to Ranf, "to be informed that we are disposed to believe you speak the truth; we do not take into account your manner of expressing it, nor the bearing you adopt towards ourselves. We accept it as natural in you. But nothing must be concealed from us."

"You ask too much," said Ranf, with a scornful smile; "I do not intend to bare my heart to you. What is necessary in this enquiry shall be told; nothing more. It is barely possible that there are points touching the present scene, but not immediately connected with it, nor of consequence in its clear explanation, which affect others present besides myself. Therefore I must be guarded, and intend to be. Be assured of this; whatever I may say, however I may act, I shall not stray from the path of right and justice."

"You had," said the president, "a purpose in view when you went to the market-place at midnight, years ago as you say, and there by accident first met Bertha Christof."

"A definite purpose," replied the hunchback; "I went to examine closely the statue of Evangeline there set up. To what end it is not necessary here to explain. I chose the hour of midnight so that I might be undisturbed. I call upon Matthew Sylvester, in confirmation of my statement. He will remember a certain conversation which took place between us at the foot of the mountain. It was of his own seeking. The message sent to me by one of my white doves ran in this wise: 'Grandfather Matthew wishes to see the master of the mountain. He will be at its foot an hour before sunrise to-morrow.' I ask him if he remembers it."

"I remember the occasion," said Matthew

Sylvester, "and the message; the words, no doubt, are correct."

"You remember, too, the conversation?"

"I do."

"Bearing in mind that I had never cast more than a casual glance at the statue of Evangeline, can you trace from our conversation any motive I may have had for a closer inspection?"

"It appears to me reasonable that you may have had such a motive."

"I thank you. Answer me now this question. Would you consent that in this assembly I should relate circumstantially the purport of our conversation?"

Matthew Sylvester glanced apprehensively at Margaret, and she, magnetised into fear, caught his hand with a convulsive movement.

"Calm yourself, Margaret," he said; "you shall know all when we are private; I have done wrong in concealing it from you so long."

"I leave the disclosure to your own discretion," said Ranf; "what was agreed upon between us was for the purpose of keeping sorrow from an innocent heart. But I am on my trial, and you have not answered my question. Do you consent that I shall relate here the purport of our conversation?"

"I do not consent."

"Then my lips are sealed, and wisely sealed, for a more fitting time will come. I went, then, to the market-place and met Bertha Christof. Cut off from human companionship and sympathy it was a habit of hers to seek companionship and sympathy from an image of marble. Even the cold stone was kinder to her than those among whom she had been reared, for she talked to it, and confided her griefs to the inanimate ear, and believed that the marble lips uttered words of love to her bruised heart. I did not deceive her—not I; it was a sweet and comforting delusion, so I allowed her to rest in it. We contracted a friendship that night, which has lasted till to-day, which will last till we draw our last breath. She would have fled from me had I been like other men, but my hump served me a good turn for once. Everything has its use. She paid me a doubtful compliment. 'You are not a man,' she said, 'for you do not speak as others do.' And yet I spoke no word to her that did not express sympathy. She looked upon it as strange that there were people in this isle who abhorred me (her own words), and that I

was the only one who had given her a kind word since her baby died. She asked me so many questions, without giving me time to answer them, and disclosed to me so much that was sorrowful, that I was drawn irresistibly to her. She took me to the grave of her baby, and I left her kneeling by it, and kissing the earth, and whispering to her child. We met again, and then she confided to me her story. It was pitiful! pitiful! If my heart was ever inclined to you, the story I heard was sufficient to draw me back. You have your laws, and you measured out justice to this poor woman because she had sinned in error. You forgot that mercy is the divinest quality of earthly justice! Would you believe that the ignorant child found fault with your priests who, telling her in words that God is love, strove to prove to her by their action, that He is hate! As for her father, let him not hope that by fasting and praying and isolation he can escape Divine condemnation for his guilt! Let him listen now to what his daughter said to me, a stranger, out of the deep tribulation of her suffering soul. She had a fantastic idea that she and the marble image of Evangeline would know each other better in the spirit land. Then she would have her baby in her arms again, she said in the fulness of her love and hope. And when in that land her father should say to her, 'Come to me, my daughter, all is forgiven!' she might reply, 'Had you been merciful to me, my baby might have lived, and I should not have been condemned to wander night after night and day after day from valley to valley, from field to field, in search of a kind look or word!' Let him think of those words, when from this court he goes back to his solitudes. What happened between Bertha Christof and myself after that? The friendship we contracted was strengthened by time, and we met again and again. It is my happiness to know that I was a solace to her, and that in all likelihood I prevented her from falling into utter despair. I address you as your equal, being at least that. I hold land in your isle, and have a right to live upon it as long as it pleases me. I have done nothing to entitle you to deprive me of my right. If you desire a further reason for the intimacy between me and the woman upon whom you would cast a mantle of shame, I can supply it. Within my freehold lies the only spot of earth this woman loves, the only memory

upon which she feeds her soul. The grave of her child is there, unconsecrated by priests, consecrated by a mother's love. That grave is her hope, her church, her refuge, her religion! The innocent dust that lies beneath the earth is witness of her purity. And for myself," said the hunchback, with so much feeling that there was sweetness in his voice, "there lives upon the isle one whom I love so dearly that no allurement or temptation could woo me to a degrading act. Bertha Christof stands before you, a wronged and sinless woman, pure as when I first met her. She is my sister—I, her brother, to whom the preservation of her honour is a sacred trust. Do you know the signs of innocence? Look in her face, and behold them!"

His hearers were much moved and wholly convinced, and the president of the court was about to speak in terms of acquittal of the charge which had been brought against him, when Ranf by a motion restrained him.

"There sits a man," he said, pointing to Daniel Christof, "with blood upon his soul. When you regard the guilty with compassion, and the innocent with aversion, as you have done this day, by what sophistry can you justify yourselves?"

Daniel Christof, with trembling steps, advanced in the direction of his daughter.

"Bertha!" he cried, holding out his hands towards her.

Ranf fell back.

"Bertha!" again cried the old man; "come to me! Forgive me!"

But she turned from him, and stepping to the hunchback's side, took his hand in hers, and firmly held it for protection.

"Your father calls you," said Ranf gently.

"I have no father," replied Bertha; "I have only my child!"

Daniel Christof looked around for pity and support, but the faces of Ranf's judges were averted from him. Without another word, he staggered to the door, and passed out of the hall.

For a few moments silence reigned. Then the hunchback spoke again.

"There is still something more. To a woman I appeal. In the name of womanhood I address her. Let her for the purposes of justice suppose that one who was precious to her—it might be a sister, dearly loved, to whom she was a protector—was torn from her by treachery. Say that she feared and fears, though long years have passed, that a too confiding nature has been led to shame. She knows it not;

the fate of that being, most dearly loved, is hidden from her. But if she learnt the bitter truth, and that sister were now to appear before her, would she take her to her arms, as in bygone days, and shed the light of love upon the withered heart? Would she press the hapless one to her breast, and whisper to her: 'Find comfort here; take shelter here; though 'all the world condemn you, I will be true to you till death?'"

"Yes! yes!" cried Margaret Sylvester, rising, in uncontrollable agitation, while the eyes of all were fixed upon her in wonder.

"Here is one," said Ranf, "falsely accused, who has been so betrayed. She has been sorely wounded! Man's bitter injustice has almost driven her mad; Heaven's mercy only has sustained her fainting soul! Pass you the verdict upon her. She will accept no other."

Margaret Sylvester glided swiftly to Bertha; she passed her arms about the neck of the outcast, and whispered: "Find comfort here! Take shelter here!" Bertha's head sank low upon Margaret's breast, her arms pressed Margaret close, and her tears flowed freely.

"The woman is judged," said Ranf to the elders; "pass judgment upon me."

"We ask your pardon," said the president, as he and the others prepared to descend from their seats.

* * * *

Five minutes later, and only Ranf and Harold remained in the court.

"You have acted grandly," said Harold. "Had I not witnessed it with my own eyes, I should never have believed it possible."

"I do not wonder. It is not easy to make you believe."

"No, it is not easy. The comedy was well rehearsed. Who directed it?"

"Fate; and sent you here to witness it."

"Producing first a revolution in my country to enable me to be present."

"Nothing more likely, if one believes in fate."

"You believe in it."

"I am beginning to do so."

"As fate's prime minister, now, what is to happen?"

"Retribution."

"Really! I shall be charmed to play my part in it. I trust it will have as appropriate an ending as the play I have

just seen. Mauvain will be rarely amused at the description I shall give him of it."

"I have no doubt. You are good—at words. When does Mauvain land?"

"He hopes to do so in a very few days, and looks forward, with delighted anticipation to the renewal of an agreeable acquaintanceship. He has a high regard for you."

"It is reciprocated."

"How long it is since we met—you and I! I have languished for a sight of you, wondering whether you were alive or dead, and whether Nature had made amends to you. Then there is another in whom I am interested, and of whom I have often thought."

"You mean Evangeline."

"Yes; that is the name. She whom I predicted would be hailed as the princess of the Silver Isle."

"You have not seen her?"

"It has not been my good fortune."

Ranf looked steadily at Harold, who laughed in his face.

"You appear to be interested in Margaret Sylvester—as though you and she had met."

"We may possibly have done so; I have met so many—and I am fond of dreaming. And you know—or guess, being able to read me so well—that I cannot resist a beautiful woman. So you have been interested in my poor statue of Evangeline. I admit it, you see; it is mine, though no one knows it but you and I. Shall we keep the secret? I abhor adulation. What strikes you particularly in it? The composition? You yourself are a master of that, Ranf? Or the face? Frankness is a great fault of mine. You see a likeness in the face, perhaps. To whom?"

"You can name her."

"Well, to humour you—Clarice?"

"Yes, Clarice."

"Between you and me, hunchback, the fairest woman I have ever known. Will you accompany me to the ship, to shake hands with Mauvain? No! Perhaps it is as well. Adieu—till our next meeting. I must see that wonderful house of yours; I will take no denial."

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ASPHODEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIXEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER III. "AND VOLATILE, AS AY WAS HIS USAGE."

ANOTHER brilliant summer day, a cloudless blue sky, a world steeped in sunshine. On the broad gravelled space in front of the palace railings the heat and glare would have been too much for a salamander, and even Daphne, who belonged to the salamander species in so much as she had an infinite capacity for enjoying sunshine, blinked a little as she crossed the shelterless promenade, under her big tussore parasol, a delightfully cool-looking figure in a plain white muslin gown, and a muslin shepherdess hat.

Poor Miss Toby's chronic headache had been a little worse this morning. Heroically had she striven to fulfil her duty, albeit to lift her leaden head from the pillow was absolute agony. She sat at the breakfast-table, white, ghastly, uncomplaining, pouring out coffee, at the very odour of which her bilious soul sickened. Vainly did Daphne entreat her to go back to bed, and to leave her charges to take care of themselves as they had done yesterday.

"We won't go to the forest any more till you are able to go with us," said Daphne, dimly conscious that her behaviour in that woodland region had been open to blame. "We can just go quietly to the palace, and stroll through the rooms with the few tourists who are likely to be there to-day. The Fontainebleau season has hardly begun, don't you know, and we may have nobody but the guide, and of course he must be a respectable person."

"My dear, I was sent here to take care of

you both, and I must do my duty," answered Miss Toby with a sickly smile. "Yesterday my temples throbbed so that I could hardly move, but I am a little better to-day, and I shall put on my bonnet and come with you."

She rose, staggered a few paces towards the adjacent chamber, and reeled like a landsman at sea. Then she sank into the nearest chair, and breathed a weary sigh.

"It's no use, Toby darling," cried Daphne, bending over her with tenderest sympathy. To be tender, sweet, and sympathetic in little outward ways, tones of voice, smiles, and looks, was one of Daphne's dangerous gifts. "My dearest Toby, why struggle against the inevitable," she urged. "It is simply one of your regular bilious attacks, and all you have to do is to lie quietly in a dark room and sleep it off, just as you have so often done before. To-morrow you will be as well as I am."

"Then why not wait till to-morrow for seeing the palace," said Miss Toby faintly, "and amuse yourselves at home for once in a way. You really ought to study a little, Daphne. Madame will be horrified if she finds you have done no work all this time."

"But I do work of an evening—sometimes, dearest," expostulated Daphne; "and I'm sure you would not like us to be half suffocated all day in this stifling little salon, poring over horrid books. We should be having the fever next, and then how would you account to Madame for your stewardship?"

"Don't be irreverent, Daphne," said Miss Toby, who thought that any use of scriptural phrases out of church was a kind of blasphemy. "I think you would really be better indoors upon such a day as this; but I feel too languid to argue the point. What would you like best, Martha?"

Miss Dibb, who employed every odd scrap of spare time in the development of her magnum opus in crochet-work, looked up with a glance of indifference, and was about to declare her willingness to stay indoors for ever, so that the crochet counterpane might flourish and wax wide, when a stealthy frown from Daphne checked her.

"Daphne would rather see the palace to-day, I know," she replied meekly, "and I think," with a nervous glance at her school-fellow, who was scowling savagely, "I think I would rather go too."

"Well," sighed Miss Toby, "I have made an effort, but I feel that I could not endure the glare out of doors. You must go alone. Be sure you are both very quiet, if there are tourists about. Don't giggle, or look round at people, or make fun of their gowns and bonnets, as you are so fond of doing. It is horribly unladylike. And if any stranger should try to get into conversation with you—of course only a low-bred person would do such a thing—pray remember that your own self-respect would counsel you to be dumb."

"Can you suppose we would speak to any one?" exclaimed Daphne, as she tripped away to her little bedroom, next door to Miss Toby's. It was the queerest little room, with a narrow white muslin curtained bed in a recess, and a marvellous piece of furniture which was washstand, chest of drawers, and dressing-table all in one; a fly-spotted glass, inclining from the wall above, was Daphne's only mirror.

Here she put on her muslin hat, with a bouquet of blue cornflowers perched coquetishly on the brim, making a patch of bright cool colour that refreshed the eye. Never had she looked prettier than this midsummer morning. Even the fly-spotted clouded old glass told her as much as that.

"If—if he were to be doing the chateau to-day," she thought, tremulous with excitement, "how strange it would be. But that's not likely. He is not of the common class of tourists, who all follow the same beaten track. I daresay he will idle away the afternoon in the woods, just as he did yesterday."

"Martha, shall we go to the forest to-day, and leave the chateau to be done to-morrow with Toby," Daphne asked when she and her companion were crossing the wide parade-ground, where the soldiers trotted by with a great noise and clatter early in the morning, with a fanfare of trumpets and an occasional roll of a drum. "It might seem kinder to poor dear Toby, don't you know?"

"I think it would be very wrong, Daphne," answered the serious Martha. "We told Miss Toby we were going to the palace, and we are bound to go straight there and nowhere else. Besides, I want to see the pictures and statues and things, and I am sick to death of that forest."

"After one day! Oh, Martha, what an unromantic soul you must be. I could live and die there, if I had pleasant company. I have always envied Rosalind and Celia."

"They must have been very glad when they got home," said Martha.

Out of the blinding whiteness of the open street they went in at a gate to a gravelled quadrangle, where the sun seemed to burn with yet more fiery heat. Even Daphne felt breathless, but it was a pleasant feeling, the delight of absolute summer, which comes so seldom in the changeful year. Then they went under an archway, and into the inner quadrangle, with the white palace on all sides of them. It wanted some minutes of eleven, and they were shown into a cool official-looking room, where they were to wait till the striking of the hour. The room was panelled, painted white, a room of Louis the Fourteenth's time most likely; what little furniture there was being quaint and rococo, but not old. The blinds were down, the shutters half-closed, and the room was in deep shadow.

"How nice!" gasped Martha, who had been panting like a fish out of water all the way.

"It is like coming into a grotto," said Daphne, sinking into a chair.

"It is not half so nice as the forest," said a voice in the semi-darkness.

Daphne gave a visible start. She had mused upon the possibility of meeting her acquaintance of yesterday, and had decided that the thing was unlikely. Yet her spirits had been buoyed by a lurking idea that he might crop up somehow before the day was done. But to find him here at the very beginning of things was startling.

"Did you know that we were coming here to-day?" she faltered.

"Hadn't the slightest idea; but I wanted to see the place myself," he answered coolly.

Daphne blushed rosy-red, deeply ashamed of her foolish, impulsive speech. The stranger had been sitting in that cool shade for the last ten minutes, and his eyes had grown accustomed to the obscurity. He saw the blush, he saw the bright expressive face under the muslin hat, the slim figure

in the white frock, every line sharply accentuated against a grey background, the slender hand in a long Swedish glove. She looked more womanly in her white gown and hat—and yet more childlike—than she had looked yesterday in her blue and scarlet.

They sat for about five minutes in profound silence. Daphne, usually loquacious, felt as if she could not have spoken for the world. Martha was by nature stolid and inclined to dumbness. The stranger was watching Daphne's face in a lazy reverie, thinking that his hurried sketch of yesterday was not half so lovely as the original, and yet it had seemed to him almost the prettiest head he had ever painted.

"The provoking minx has hardly one good feature," he thought. "It is an utterly unpaintable beauty—a beauty of colour, life, and movement. Photograph her asleep, and she would be as plain as a pike-staff. How different from——"

He gave a faint sigh, and was startled from his musing by the door opening with a bang and an official calling out, "This way, ladies and gentlemen."

They crossed the blazing court-yard in the wake of a brisk little gentleman in uniform, who led them up a flight of stone steps, and into a stony hall. Thence to the chapel, and then to an upper storey, and over polished floors through long suites of rooms, every one made more or less sacred by historical memories. Here was the table on which Napoleon the Great signed his abdication, while his Old Guard waited in the quadrangle below. Daphne looked first at the table and then out of the window, almost as if she expected to see that faithful soldiery drawn up in the stony court-yard—grim bearded men who had fought and conquered on so many a field, victors of Eylau, Lodi, Jena, and Austerlitz, and knew now that all was over and that their leader's star had gone down.

Then to rooms hallowed by noble Marie Antoinette, lovely alike in felicity and in ruin. Smaller, prettier, more homelike rooms came next, where the citizen king and his gentle wife tasted the sweetness of calm domestic joys; a tranquil gracious family circle; to be transferred, with but a brief interval of stormy weather, to the quiet reaches of the Thames, in Horace Walpole's beloved "County of Twits." Then back to the age of tournaments and tented fields, and lo, they were in the rooms which courtly Francis built and adorned, and

glorified by his august presence. Here amidst glitter of gold and glow of colour the great king—Charles the Fifth's rival and victor—lived and loved, and shed sunshine upon an adoring court. Here from many a canvas, fresh as if painted yesterday, look the faces of the past. Names fraught with mighty memories sanctify every nook and corner of the palace. Everywhere they see the cypher of Diana of Poitiers linked with that of her royal lover, Henry the Second. Catherine de' Medici must have looked upon those interlaced initials many a time in the period of her probation, looked, and held her peace, and schooled herself to patience, waiting till Fortune's wheel should turn and bring her day of power. Here in this long lofty chamber, sunlit, the fated Monaldeschi's life blood stained the polished floor.

"To say the least of it, the act was an impertinence on Queen Christina's part, seeing that she was only a visitor at Fontainebleau," said the stranger languidly. "Don't you think so, Poppæ?"

Daphne required to have the whole story told her; that particular event not having impressed itself on her mind.

"I have read all through Bonnechese's history of France, and half way from the beginning again," she explained. "But when one sits droning history in a row of droning girls, even a murder doesn't make much impression upon one. It's all put in the same dull, dry way. This year there was a great scarcity of corn. The poor in the provinces suffered extreme privations. Queen Christina, of Sweden, while on a visit at Fontainebleau, ordered the execution of her counsellor Monaldeschi. There was also a plague at Marseilles. The Dauphin died suddenly in the fifteenth year of his age. The king held a Bed of Justice for the first time since he ascended the throne. That is the kind of thing, you know."

"I can conceive that so bald a calendar would scarcely take a firm grip upon one's memory," assented the stranger. "Details are apt to impress the mind more than events."

After this came the rooms which the Pope occupied during his captivity—rooms that had double and treble memories; here a nuptial-chamber, there a room all aglitter with gilding—a room that had sheltered Charles the Fifth, and afterwards fair, and not altogether fortunate, Anne of Austria. Daphne felt as if her brain would hardly hold so much history. She felt a

kind of relief when they came to a theatre, where plays had been acted before Napoleon the Third and his lovely empress in days that seemed to belong to her own life.

"I think I was born then," she said naively.

There had been no other visitors—no tourists of high or low degree. The two girls and the unknown had had the palace to themselves, and the guide, mollified by a five-franc piece slipped into his hand by the gentleman, had allowed them to make their circuit at a somewhat more leisurely pace than that brisk trot on which he usually insisted.

Yet for all this it was still early when they came down the double flight of steps and found themselves once again in the quadrangle, the Court of Farewells, so called from the day when the great Emperor bade adieu to pomp and power, and went forth from the palace to foreign exile. The sun had lost none of his power—nay, had ascended to his topmost heaven, and was pouring down his rays upon the baking earth.

"Let us go to the gardens and feed the carp," said Nero, and it was an infinite relief, were it only for the refreshment of the eye, to find themselves under green trees and by the margin of a lovely lake, statues of white marble gleaming yonder at the end of green arcades, fountains plashing. Here under the trees a delicious coolness and stillness contrasted with the glare of light on the open space yonder, where an old woman sits at a stall, set out with cakes and sweetmeats, ready to supply food for the carp-feeders.

"Yes; let us feed the carp," cried Daphne, running out into this sunlit space, her white gown looking like some saintly raiment in the supernatural light of a transfiguration. "That will be lovely! I have heard of them. They are intensely old, are they not—older than the palace itself?"

"They are said to have been here when Henry and Diana walked in yonder alleys," replied Nero. "I believe they were here when the Roman legions conquered Gaul. One thing seems as likely as the other, doesn't it, Poppæa?"

"I don't know about that: but I like to think they are intensely old," answered Daphne, leaning on the iron railing, and looking down at the fish, which were already competing for her favours, feeling assured she meant to feed them.

The old woman got up from her stool,

and came over to ask if the young lady would like some bread for the carp.

"Yes, please—a lot," cried Daphne, and she began to fumble in her pocket for the little purse with its three or four francs and half-francs.

The stranger tossed a franc to the woman before Daphne's hand could get to the bottom of her pocket, and the bread was forthcoming—a fine hunch off a long loaf. Daphne began eagerly to feed the fish. They were capital fun, disputing vehemently for her bounty, huge grey creatures which looked centuries old—savage, artful, vicious exceedingly. She gave them each a name. One was Francis, another Henry, another Diana, another Catherine. She was as pleased and amused as a child, now throwing her bit of bread as far as her arm could fling it, and laughing merrily at the eager rush of competitors, now luring them close to the rails, and smiling down at the grey snouts yawning for their prey.

"Do you think they would eat me if I were to tumble in among them?" asked Daphne. "Greedy creatures! They seem ravenous enough for anything. There! they have had all my bread."

"Shall I buy you some more?"

"Please, no. This kind of thing might go on for ever. They are insatiable. You would be ruined."

"Shall we go under the trees?"

"If you like. But don't you think this sunshine delicious? It is so nice to bask. I think I am rather like a cat in my enjoyment of the sun."

"Your friend seems to have had enough of it," said Nero, glancing towards a sheltered bench to which Miss Dibb had discreetly withdrawn herself.

"Martha! I had almost forgotten her existence. The carp are so absorbing."

"Let us stay in the sunshine. We can rejoin your friend presently. She has taken out her needlework, and seems to be enjoying herself."

"Another strip of her everlasting counterpane," said Daphne. "That girl's persevering industry is maddening. It makes one feel so abominably idle. Would you be very shocked to know that I detest needlework?"

"I should as soon expect a butterfly to be fond of needlework as you," answered Nero. "Let me see your hand."

She had taken off her glove to feed the carp, and her hand lay upon the iron rail, dazzlingly white in the sunshine. Nero

took it up in his, so gently, so reverently, that she could not resent the action. He took it as a priest or physician might have taken it; altogether with a professional scientific air.

"Do you know that I am a student of chiromancy?" he asked.

"How should I, when I don't know anything about you? And I don't even know what chiromancy is."

"The science of reading fate and character from the configuration of the hand."

"Why that is what gipsies pretend to do," cried Daphne. "You surely cannot believe in such nonsense."

"I don't know that my belief goes very far, but I have found the study full of interest, and more than once I have stumbled upon curious truths."

"So do the most ignorant gipsy fortune-tellers," retorted Daphne. "People who are always guessing must sometimes guess right. But you may tell my fortune all the same, please; it will be more amusing than the carp."

"If you approach the subject in such an irreverent spirit, I don't think I will have anything to say to you. Remember, I have gone into this question thoroughly, from a scientific point of view."

"I am sure you are wonderfully clever," said Daphne; and then in a coaxing voice, with a lovely look from the sparkling grey eyes, she pleaded: "Tell my fortune, please. I shall be wretched if you refuse."

"And I should be wretched if I were to disoblige you. Your left hand, please, and be serious, for it is a very solemn ordeal."

She gave him her left hand. He turned the soft rosy childish palm to the sunlight, and pored over it as intently as if it had been some manuscript treatise of Albertus Magnus, written in cypher, to be understood only by the hierophant in science.

"You are of a fitful temper," he said, "and do not make many friends. Yet you are capable of loving intensely—one or two persons perhaps, not more; indeed, I think only one at a time, for your nature is concentrative rather than diffuse."

He spoke slowly and deliberately—coldly indifferent as an antique oracle—with his eyes upon her hand all the time. He took no note of the changes in her expressive face, which would have told him that he had hit the truth.

"You are apt to be dissatisfied with life."

"Oh, indeed I am," she cried, with a

weary sigh; "there are times when I do so hate my life and all things belonging to me—except just one person—that I would change places with any peasant-girl trudging home from market."

"You are romantic, variable. You do not care for beaten paths, and have a hankering for the wild and strange. You love the sea better than the land, the night better than the day."

"You are a wizard," cried Daphne, remembering her wild delight in the dancing waves as she stood on the deck of the Channel steamer, her intense love of the winding river at home, the deep rapid stream, and of fresh salt breezes, and a free ocean life; remembering too how her soul had thrilled with rapture in the shadowy court-yard last night, when her shuttlecock flew up towards the moon. "You have a wonderful knack of finding out things," she said. "Go on, please."

He had dropped her hand suddenly, and was looking up at her with intense earnestness.

"Please go on," she repeated impatiently.

"I have done. There is no more to be told."

"Nonsense. I know you are keeping back something; I can see it in your face. There is something unpleasant—or something strange—I could see it in the way you looked at me just now. I insist upon knowing everything."

"Insist! I am only a fortune-teller so far as it pleases me. Do you think if a man's hand told me that he was destined to be hanged, I should make him uneasy by saying so?"

"But my case is not so bad as that?"

"No; not quite so bad as that," he answered lightly, trying to smile.

The whole thing seemed more or less a joke; but there are some natures so sensitive that they tremble at the lightest touch; and Daphne felt uncomfortable.

"Do tell me what it was," she urged earnestly.

"My dear child, I have no more to tell you. The hand shows character rather than fate. Your character is as yet but half developed. If you want a warning, I would say to you: Beware of the strength of your own nature. In that lies your greatest danger. Life is easiest to those who can take it lightly—who can bend their backs to any burden, and be grateful for every ray of sunshine."

"Yes," she answered contemptuously:

"for the drudges. But please tell me the rest. I know you read something in these queer little lines and wrinkles," scrutinising her pink palm as she spoke, "something strange and startling — for you were startled. You can't deny that."

"I am not going to admit or deny anything," said Nero, with a quiet firmness that conquered her, resolute as she was when her own pleasure or inclination was in question. "The oracle has spoken. Make the most you can of his wisdom."

"You have told me nothing," she said, pouting, but submissive.

"And now let us go out of this bakery, under the trees yonder, where your friend looks so happy with her crochet-work."

"I think we ought to go home," hesitated Daphne, not in the least as if she meant it.

"Home! nonsense. It isn't one yet; and you don't dine at one, do you?"

"We dine at six," replied Daphne with dignity, "but we sometimes lunch at half-past one."

"Your luncheon isn't a very formidable affair, is it—hardly worth going home for."

"It will keep," said Daphne. "If there is anything more to be seen, Martha and I may as well stop and see it."

"There are the gardens, beyond measure lovely on such a day as this; and there is the famous vinery; and I think, if we could find a very retired spot out of the ken of yonder beardless patrol, I might smuggle in the materials for another picnic."

"That would be too delightful," cried Daphne, clapping her hands in childish glee, forgetful of fate and clairvoyance.

They strolled slowly through the blinding heat towards that cool grove where patient Martha sat weaving her web, as inflexible in her stolid industry as if she had been one of the fatal sisters.

"What have you been doing all this time, Daphne?" she asked, lifting up her eyes as they approached.

"Feeding the carp. You have no idea what fun they are."

"I wonder you are not afraid of a sun-stroke."

"I am never afraid of anything, and I love the sun. Come, Martha, roll up that everlasting crochet, and come for a ramble. We are going to explore the gardens, and by-and-by Mr. Nero is going to get us some lunch."

Martha looked at the unknown doubtfully, yet not without favour. She was a good, conscientious girl, but she was fond

of her meals, and a luncheon in the cool shade of these lovely groves would be very agreeable. She fancied, too, that the stranger would be a good caterer. He was much more carefully dressed to-day, in a grey travelling suit. Everything about him looked fresh and bright, and suggestive of easy circumstances. She began to think that Daphne was right, and that he was no Bohemian artist, living from hand to mouth, but a gentleman of position, and that it would not be so very awkward to meet him in Regent Street, when she should be shopping with mamma and Jane.

They strolled through the shady groves on the margin of the rippling lake, faintly stirred by lightest zephyrs. They admired the marble figures of nymph and dryad, which Martha thought would have looked better if they had been more elaborately clad. They wasted half an hour in happy idleness, enjoying the air, the cool umbrage of lime and chestnut, the glory of the distant light yonder on green sward or blue placid lake, enjoying Nature as she should be enjoyed, in perfect carelessness of mind and heart—as Horace enjoyed his Sabine wood, singing his idle praise of Lalage as he wandered, empty of care.

They found at last an utterly secluded spot, where no eye of military or civil authority could reach them.

"Now, if you two young ladies will only be patient, and amuse yourselves here for a quarter of an hour or so, I will see what can be done in the smuggling line," said the unknown.

"I could stay here for a week," said Daphne, establishing herself comfortably on the velvet turf, while Martha pulled out her work-bag and resumed her crochet-hook. "Take your time, Mr. Nero. I am going to sleep."

She threw off the muslin hat, and laid her cheek upon the soft mossy bank, letting the pale golden hair fall like a veil over her neck and shoulders. They were in the heart of a green bosquet, far from the palace, far from the beaten track of tourists. Nero stopped at a curve in the path to look back at the recumbent figure, the sunny falling hair, the exquisite tint of cheek and chin and lips, just touched by the sun-ray glinting through a break in the foliage. He stood for a few moments admiring this living picture, and then walked slowly down the avenue.

"A curious idle way of wasting a day," he mused, "but when a man has nothing particular to do with his days he may as

well waste them one way as another. How lovely the child is in her imperfection: a faulty beauty—a faulty nature—but full of fascination. I must write a description of her in my next letter to my dear one. How interested she would feel in this childish, undisciplined character."

But somehow when his next letter to the lady of his love came to be written he was in a lazy mood, and did not mention Daphne. The subject, to be interesting, required to be treated in detail, and he did not feel himself equal to the task.

"Isn't he nice?" asked Daphne, when the unknown had departed.

"He is very gentlemanlike," assented Martha, "but still I feel we are doing wrong in encouraging him."

"Encouraging him!" echoed her schoolfellow. "You talk as if he were a stray cur that had followed us."

"You perfectly well know what I mean, Daphne. It cannot be right to get acquainted with a strange gentleman as we have done. I wouldn't have mamma or Jane know of it for the world."

"Then don't tell them," said Daphne, yawning listlessly, and opening her outspread palm for a nondescript green insect to crawl over it.

"But it seems such a want of candour," objected Martha.

"Then tell them, and defy them. But whatever you do, don't be fussy, you dear good-natured old Martha; for of all things fussiness is the most detestable in hot weather. As for Mr. Nero, he will be off and away across the Jura before to-morrow night, I daresay, and he will forget us, and we shall forget him, and the thing will be all over and done with. I wish he would bring us our luncheon. I'm hungry."

"I feel rather faint," admitted Martha, who thought it ungenteel to confess absolute hunger. "That bread we get for breakfast is all holes. Shall you tell your sister about Mr. Nero?"

"That depends. I may, perhaps, if I should be hard up for something to say to her."

"Don't you think she would be angry?"

"She never is angry. She is all sweetness, and goodness, and belief in other people. I have spent very little of my life with her, or I should be ever so much better than I am. I should have grown up like her perhaps—or just a little like her, for I'm afraid the clay is different—if my father would have let me be brought up at home."

"And he wouldn't?" asked Martha.

She had heard her friend's history very often, or as much of it as Daphne cared to tell, but she was always interested in the subject, and encouraged her schoolfellow's egotism. Daphne's people belonged to a world which Miss Dibb could never hope to enter; though perhaps Daphne's father, Sir Vernon Lawford, had no larger income than Mr. Dibb, whose furniture and general surroundings were the best and most gorgeous that money could buy.

"No. When I was a little thing I was sent to a lady at Brighton, who kept a select school for little things; because my father could not bear a small child about the house. When I grew too tall for my frocks, and was all stocking and long hair, I was transferred to a very superior establishment at Leamington, because my father could not be worried by the spectacle of an awkward growing girl. When I grew still taller, and was almost a young woman, I was packed off to Madame Tolmache to be finished; and I am to be finished early next year, I believe, and then I am to go home, and my father will have to endure me."

"How nice for you to go home for good. And your home is very beautiful, is it not?" asked Martha, who had heard it described a hundred times.

"It is a lovely house in Warwickshire, all amongst meadows and winding streams—a long low white house, don't you know, with no end of verandahs and balconies. I have been there very little, as you may imagine, but I love the dear old place, all the same."

"I don't think I should like to live so far in the country," said Martha. "Clapham is so much nicer."

"Connais pas," said Daphne indifferently.

The unknown came sauntering back along the leafy arcade, but not alone; an individual quite as fashionably clad, and of appearance as gentlemanlike, walked a pace or two behind him.

"Well, young ladies, I have succeeded splendidly as a smuggler; but I thought two could bring more than one, so I engaged an ally. Now, Dickson, produce the Cluquot."

The individual addressed as Dickson took a gold-topped pint bottle out of each side-pocket. He then, from some crafty lurking-place, drew forth a crockery encased pie, some knives and forks, and a couple of napkins, while Nero emptied his own pockets, and spread their contents on the turf. He had brought some wonderful

cherries—riper and sweeter-looking than French fruit usually is—several small white paper packages which suggested confectionery, a tumbler, and half-a-dozen rolls, which he had artfully disposed in his various pockets.

"We must have looked rather bulky," he said; "but I suppose the custodians of the place were too sleepy to take any notice of us. The nippers, Dickson? Yes! Thoughtful man! You can come back in an hour for the bottles and the pie-dish."

Dickson bowed respectfully and retired.

"Is that your valet?" asked Daphne.

"He has the misfortune to fill that thankless office."

Daphne burst out laughing.

"And you travel with your own servant?" she exclaimed. "It is too absurd. Do you know that yesterday I took you for a poor strolling artist, and I felt that it would be an act of charity to give you half-a-guinea for that sketch?"

"You would not have obtained it from me for a thousand half-guineas. No; I do not belong to the hard-up section of humanity. Perhaps many a penniless scamp is a better and a happier man than I; but, although poverty is the school for heroes, I have never regretted that it was not my lot to be a pupil in that particular academy. And now, young ladies, fall to, if you please. Here is a Perigord pie, which I am assured is the best that Strasbourg can produce, and here are a few pretty tiny kickshaws in the way of pastry; and here, to wash these trifles down, is a bottle of the Widow Cliquot's champagne."

"I don't know that I ever tasted champagne in my life," said Daphne.

"How odd!" cried Martha. "What, not at juvenile parties?"

"I have never been at any juvenile parties."

"We have it often at home," said Martha, with a swelling consciousness of belonging to wealthy people. "At picnics, and whenever there is company to luncheon. The grown-ups have it every evening at dinner, if they like. Papa takes a particular pride in his champagne."

They grouped themselves upon the grass, hidden from all the outside world by rich summer foliage, much more alone than they had been yesterday in the heart of the forest. Honest Martha Dibb, who had been sorely affronted at the free-and-easiness of yesterday's simple meal, offered no objection to the luxurious feast of to-

day. A man who travelled with his valet could not be altogether an objectionable person. The whole thing was unconventional—slightly incorrect, even—but there was no longer any fear that they were making friends with a vagabond, who might turn up in after life and ask for small loans.

"He is evidently a gentleman," thought Martha, quite overcome by the gentility of the valet. "I daresay papa and mamma would be glad to know him."

Her spirits enlivened by the champagne, Miss Dibb became talkative.

"Do you know Clapham Common?" she asked the stranger.

"I have heard of such a place. I believe I have driven past it occasionally on my way to Epsom," he answered listlessly, with his eyes on Daphne, who was seated in a lazy attitude, her back supported by the trunk of a lime-tree, her head resting against the brown bark, which made a sombre background for her yellow hair, her arms hanging loose at her sides in perfect restfulness, her face and attitude alike expressing a dreamy softness, as of one for whom the present hour is enough, and all time and life beyond it no more than a vague dream. She had just touched the brim of the champagne glass with her lips, and that was all. She had pronounced the Perigord pie the nastiest thing that she had ever tasted; and she had lunched luxuriously upon pastry and cherries.

"I live on Clapham Common, when I am at home," said Martha. "Papa has bought a large house, built in the Greek style, and we have ever so many hot-houses. Papa takes particular pride in his grapes and pines. Are you fond of pines?"

"Not particularly," answered Nero, stifling a yawn. "And where do you live when you are at home, my pretty Poppæa?" he asked, smiling at Daphne, who had lifted one languid arm to convey a ripe red cherry to lips that were as fresh and rosy as the fruit.

"In Oxford Street," answered Daphne coolly.

Miss Dibb's eyebrows went up in horrified wonder; she gave a little gasp, as who should say, "This is too much!" but did not venture a contradiction.

"In Oxford Street? Why, that is quite a business thoroughfare. Is your father in trade?"

"Yes. He keeps an Italian warehouse."

Martha became red as a turkey-cock. This was a liberty which she felt she ought

to resent at once; but, sooth to say, the matter-of-fact Martha had a wholesome awe of her friend. Daphne was very sweet; Daphne and she were sworn allies; but Daphne had a sharp tongue, and could let fly little shafts of speech, half playful, half satiric, that pierced her friend to the quick.

"I hope there is nothing that I need be ashamed of in my father's trade," she said gravely.

"Of course not," faltered the stranger. "Trade is a most honourable employment of capital and intelligence, I have the greatest respect for the trading classes—but——"

"But you seemed surprised when I told you my father's position."

"Yes; I confess that I was surprised. You don't look like a tradesman's daughter, somehow. If you had told me that your father was a painter or a poet, or an actor even, I should have thought it the most natural thing in the world. You look as if you were allied to the arts."

"Is that a polite way of saying that I don't look quite respectable?"

"I am not going to tell you what I mean. You would say I was paying you compliments, and I believe you have tabooed all compliments. I may be ruder than Petruchio—didn't you tell me so in the forest yesterday?—but any attempt at playing Sir Charles Grandison will be resented."

"I certainly like you best when you are rude," answered Daphne.

She was not as animated as she had been yesterday during their homeward walk. The heat and the utter stillness of the spot invited silence and repose. She was, perhaps, a little tired by the exploration of the chateau. She sat under the drooping branches of the lime, whose blossoms sweetened all the air, half in light, half in shadow: while Martha, who had eaten a hearty luncheon, and consumed nearly a pint of Cliquot, plodded on with her crochet-work, and tried to keep the unknown in conversation.

She asked him if he had seen this, and that, and the other—operas, theatres, horticultural fêtes—labouring hard to make him understand that her people were in the very best society—as if opera-boxes and horticultural fêtes meant society!—and succeeding only in boring him outrageously.

He would have been content to sit in dreamy silence, watching Daphne eat her cherries. Such an occupation seemed best

suited to the sultry summer silence, the perfumed atmosphere.

But Martha thought silence must mean dulness.

"We are dreadfully quiet to-day," she said. "We must do something to get the steam up. Shall we have some riddles? I know lots of good ones that I didn't ask you yesterday."

"Please don't," cried Nero; "I am not equal to it. I think a single conundrum would crush me. Let us sit and dream."

"How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height."

Martha looked round enquiringly. She did not see either myrrh-bush or height in the landscape. They were in a level bit of the park, shut in by trees.

"Is that poetry?" she asked

"Well, it's the nearest approach to it that the last half-century has produced," replied the unknown, and then he went on quoting:

"But propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill."

Poppæa, I wish you and I were queen and king of a Lotos Island, and could idle away our lives in perpetual summer."

"We should soon grow tired of it," answered Daphne. "I am like the little boy in the French story-book. I like all the seasons. And I daresay you skate, hunt, and do all manner of things that couldn't be done in summer."

"True, my astute empress. But when one is sitting under lime-boughs on such a day as this, eternal summer seems your only idea of happiness."

He gave himself up to idle musing. Yes; he was surprised, disappointed even, at the notion of this bright-haired nymph's parentage. There was no discredit in being a tradesman's daughter. He was very far from feeling a contempt for commerce. There were reasons in his own history why he should have considerable respect for successful trade. But for this girl he had imagined a different pedigree. She had a high-bred air—even in her reckless unconventionality—which accorded ill with his idea of a prosperous tradesman's daughter. There was a poetry in her every look and movement, a wild untutored grace, which was the strangest of all flowers

to have blossomed in a parlour behind a London shop. Reared in the smoke and grime of Oxford Street! Brought up amidst ever present considerations of pounds, shillings, and pence! The girl and her surroundings were so incongruous that the mere idea of them worried him.

"And by-and-by she will marry some bloated butcher or pompous coach-builder, and spend all her days among the newly rich," he thought. "She will grow into the fat wife of a fat alderman, and over-dress and over-eat herself, and live a life of prosperous vulgarity."

The notion was painful to him, and he was obliged to remind himself that there was very little likelihood of his ever seeing this girl again, so that the natural commonplaceness of her fate could make very little difference to him.

"Better to be vulgarly prosperous and live to be a great-grandmother than to fulfil the prophecy written on her hand," he said to himself. "What does it matter? Let us enjoy to-day, and let the long line of to-morrows rest in the shadow that wraps the unknown future. To-morrow I shall be on my way to Geneva, panting and stifling in a padded railway-carriage, with oily Frenchmen, who will insist upon having the windows up through the heat and dust of the long summer day, and I shall look back with envy to this delicious afternoon."

They sat under the limes for a couple of hours, talking a little now and then in a desultory way; Martha trying her hardest to impress the unknown with the grand-deurs and splendours of Lebanon Lodge, Clapham Common; Daphne saying very little, content to sit in the shade and dream. Then, having taken their fill of rest and shadow, they ventured out into the sun, and went to see the famous grapery, and then Martha looked at her watch and protested that they must go home to tea. Miss Toby would be expecting them.

Nero went with them to the gates of the palace, and would fain have gone further, but Daphne begged him to leave them there.

"You would only frighten our poor governess," she said. "She would think it quite a terrible thing for us to have made your acquaintance. Please go back to your hotel at once."

"If you command me to do so, I must obey," said Nero politely.

He shook hands with them for the first

time, gravely lifted his hat, and walked across to his hotel. It was on the opposite side of the way, a big white house, with a garden in front of it, and a fountain playing. The two girls stood in the shadow watching him.

"He really is very nice," said Martha. "I think mamma would like to have him at one of her dinner-parties. But he did not tell us anything about himself, did he?"

Daphne did not hear her. There was hardly room in that girlish brain for all the thoughts that were crowding into it.

A WISE AND WITTY JUDGE.

THERE are certain sayers of good things whose wit has a peculiar flavour—quite distinct and original; any new utterance of theirs being received with a welcome cordiality as something precious. Sidney Smith and Charles Lamb belong to this limited class. Their flavour is as special as that of the shalot or olive. Among judges Maule stands apart in the quality of his utterances; there is a wisdom and pleasant bitterness behind the wit, and one or two of his jests or bits of cynicism have found niches in the public museum, to be quoted and help illustration as occasion serves. During his lifetime the bar took special delight in the form which his sarcastic references to what he disapproved assumed, and the public were equally entertained. It is worth while to collect some of these scattered remarks and quips, which do such credit to one of the few witty judges that have adorned the bench.

Like the present Justice Grove he was a great mathematician, and solaced weary hours with devising brilliant problems and solutions, &c., in the higher departments. Their awful intricacies appal the outsider, and to him are about as suggestive as one of Beethoven's symphonies was to an eminent chemist of our acquaintance, who, somewhat pleased, though ignorant of the science, declared that "it suggested to him bichromate of potassium before its precipitation." I cannot vouch for this being a technically accurate description, but the phrase ran somehow in that fashion. This was Maule's "elective affinity;" but another solace of life which gives delight to many others, namely, knighthood, he was said to have held in horror. Nay, he protested that he would never submit to the adornment, or indignity, as it might be considered. Though he is called in the books

"Sir W. Maule, Knt.," it is actually a doubtful point whether he ever went through the ceremony, as no record can be found in the heralds' or lord chamberlains' books. This, however, has been somewhat cynically explained by the fact that the officials of those fountains of honour only take notice of proceedings that have been emphasised by fees, and that the judge, being compelled to endure the decoration, made at least the form of protest of declining to pay.

At the university he was distinguished. Mr. Greville recollected being at school with him, and recalled himself to his recollection long after when they met. He tells the story oddly enough :

"Came up to town yesterday to dine with the Villiers at a dinner of clever men got up at the Athenæum, and was extremely bored. The original party was broken up by various excuses, and the vacancies supplied by men none of whom I knew. There were Poulett Thomson, three Villiers, Taylor, Young, whom I knew ; the rest I never saw before—Buller, Romilly, Senior, Maule, a man whose name I forget, and Walker, a police magistrate, all men of more or less talent and information, and altogether producing anything but an agreeable party. Maule was senior wrangler and senior medallist at Cambridge, and is a lawyer. He was nephew to the man with whom I was at school thirty years ago, and I had never seen him since ; he was then a very clever boy, and assisted to teach the boys, being admirably well taught himself by his uncle, who was an excellent scholar and a great brute. I have young Maule now in my mind's eye suspended by the hair of his head while being well caned, and recollect as if it was yesterday his doggedly drumming a lesson of Terence into my dull and reluctant brain as we walked up and down the garden-walk before the house. When I was introduced to him I had no recollection of him, but when I found out who he was I went up to him with the blandest manner as he sat reading a newspaper, and said that 'I believed we had once been well acquainted, though we had not met for twenty-seven years.' He looked up and said, 'Oh, it is too long ago to talk about,' and then turned back to his paper. So I set him down for a brute like his uncle and troubled him no further."

The description of the accomplishments of this accomplished man, and the pleasant singularity of his tastes, is remarkable. His

knowledge of English and French literature was remarkable to a degree. Italian and Spanish "he knew a little," a modest description of what in other men would be sound and satisfactory familiarity. One amusing department of letters he had "at his fingers' ends," namely, *Ana*, those collections of quaint stories which fill shelves in the library. Some one having purchased a volume of these jests, which he boasted contained an unusual proportion of fresh material, Maule offered a wager that, on hearing the first two lines of each anecdote he would complete the story ; and used to relate with pleasant triumph how he had won his wager, without failing in a single instance. His memory was indeed prodigious, being stored with every kind of curious thing—passages from Greek, Latin, and French poets in all kinds of metres, even strings of nursery rhymes, in this suggesting the power of Macaulay. No one could tell a story with such humour, and it is said that Lord Brougham declared he was the only man he would rather not encounter in conversation. One of his singular capacities was the picking of locks, in which craft he was a master, performing prodigies with no other implement than a piece of wire. This art he was oddly led to cultivate through a habit of losing his keys, and finding himself at a circuit town unable to open his portmanteau. Again, he was fond of relating his triumph over a rural locksmith, who with all his tools and appliances had failed, and whose bewildered expressions at the amateur's instant success he mimicked admirably.

He was born in 1788, and raised to the bench in 1839, after sitting for Carlow a year or two. In Westminster Hall he had the reputation of being a sound lawyer, "and a good judge, too." And a single legal illustration of his conveys even to the unprofessional mind an idea of acuteness which makes us mutter, "*Si sic omnes.*" He thus laid down this reasonable doctrine as to the presumption in case of thefts: "If a man go into the London Docks sober, without the means of getting drunk, and comes out of one of the cellars, wherein are a million gallons of wine, very drunk, I think that would be reasonable evidence that he had stolen some of the wine in the cellar, though you could not prove that any wine was stolen, or any wine missed."

Nothing could be happier, while equally good was his description of imprisonment

for debt, which he characterised as "merely a device for enabling a man to pledge the credit of his friends." It was noticed at the bar that there was never in all his witty distinctions, however ingenious and amusing, any hair-splittings of fanciful points. A writer in *The Law Magazine*, who has brought together many specimens of his wit, mentions the case of Lomax, where a person being merely described or denoted by an initial, it was demurred to as being no name. The judge, however, suggested that an initial, being utterable alone, might be "a name" descriptive enough. To this it was replied that the plea itself styled it an initial, so letter it could only be. The judge, however, was ready with the retort that a first letter might be the only letter as well as the first, employing this happy illustration that B's only son would be entitled to a legacy if he were described as B's eldest son. But what he excelled in was a happy irony, and it is "in this connection" that the most memorable and often quoted of his utterances has been put on record. This has been often repeated according to recollection, helped out with much inventive addition, or such amplification as the narrators' fancy supplied; but the true version is to be found in the papers of the day, in the report of the shorthand-writer. It was addressed to a poor mechanic:

"Prisoner, you have been convicted upon clear evidence. You have intermarried with another woman, your lawful wife being still alive. You have committed bigamy. You tell me—and, indeed, the evidence has shown—that your first wife left her home and her young children to live with another man. You say this prosecution is an instrument of extortion. Be it so. I am bound to tell you that these are circumstances which the law does not in your case take notice of. You had no right to take the law into your own hands. Every Englishman is bound to know that when a wrong is done, the law—or perhaps I should rather say the Constitution—affords a remedy. Now listen to me, and I will tell you what you ought to have done. You should have gone to an attorney and directed him to bring an action. You should have prepared your evidence, instructed counsel, and proved your case in court; and recollect that it was imperative that you should recover—I do not mean actually obtain—substantial damages. Having proceeded thus far, you should have employed a proctor, and instituted

a suit in the ecclesiastical courts for a divorce a mensâ et thoro. Your case is a very clear one, and I doubt not you would have obtained your divorce. After this step your course was quite plain: you had only to obtain a private Act of Parliament to dissolve your marriage. This you would get as a matter of course upon payment of the proper fees, and proof of the facts. You might then have lawfully married again. I perceive, prisoner, that you appear scarcely to understand what I am saying to you, but let me assure you that these steps are constantly taken by persons who are desirous to dissolve an unhappy marriage. It is true, for the wise man has said it, that 'a hated woman, when she is married, is a thing that the earth cannot bear,' and that 'a bad wife is to her husband as rottenness to his bones.' You, however, must bear this great evil, or must adopt the remedy prescribed by the Constitution of the country. I see you would tell me that these proceedings would cost you a thousand pounds, and that all your small stock-in-trade is not worth a hundred pounds. Perhaps it may so be. The law has nothing to say to that. If you had taken these proceedings you would have been free from your present wife, and the woman whom you have secondly married would have been a respectable matron. As you have not done so, you stand there a convicted culprit, and it is my duty to pass sentence on you. - You will be imprisoned for one day."

The delightful irony of this has seldom been equalled, and the gravity of the passage, "I perceive, prisoner, that you appear scarcely to understand," followed by the explanatory "let me assure you," &c., is in the best style. We can fancy the bewilderment of the culprit at the end with his expectancy of some swinging sentence. On him, at least, the irony was thrown away.

It is ludicrous to find, however, though not surprising, that this persiflage was often found too exquisite for his hearers, who accepted the apparent instead of the lurking sense. On one occasion, when the counsel for a coiner, hard pressed for a defence, urged that his imitation of the pieces was so clumsily done as to be practically no imitation at all, the judge gravely told the jury—a Surrey one—that the legal force of the argument was good, so that if the prisoner, "in manufacturing the article, did not intend to imitate a half-crown, but some other thing—a boot-

jack, for instance, an inkstand, a looking-glass, or a pair of nut-crackers, in such case they will acquit." The bewildered jury, accepting this doctrine, accordingly did acquit.

There was a bitter originality too in his sarcasm. Witness the following. In a libel case at Birmingham he said: "One of the defendants, the Rev. Mr. —, is, it seems, a minister of religion—of what religion does not appear; but to judge by his conduct, it cannot be any form of Christianity." The idea here would have occurred, and has occurred, to many, namely, sarcastic reference to the opposition between a Christian minister's profession and his practice, but it is the neatness of the form of reference that is original.

In a curious little miscellany, an attorney's Random Recollections of the Midland Circuit, the following are given:

"In a case where the jury wished to retire to consider their verdict, the usual oath was administered, 'that they should be kept in some convenient place, without meat, drink, or fire, candlelight excepted, till they had agreed,' &c. A communication having been made to the judge that one of the jurymen had sent out for a glass of water, Maule affected to treat the request as one of considerable importance, desiring the officer to repeat the oath to the retiring jurymen. He then called for Lush's Practice. After some hesitation, he stated he was clear water was not meat, neither was it drink in the popular acceptation of the word, and therefore the jurymen might have as much water as he thought fit.

"At Derby the same judge was in the act of passing sentence upon a man, when the governor of the county gaol came to the table to deliver some calendars to the members of the bar, and, in so doing, passed between the prisoner and the judge. Maule thereupon intimated to the governor that, in so doing, he had outraged one of the best-known conventional rules of society. 'Don't you know,' said the judge, 'you ought never to pass between two gentlemen when one gentleman is addressing another?' The offender against this conventional rule apologised and retired; whereupon the judge sentenced the other gentleman to seven years' transportation.

"Interrupting a counsel, who was arguing in not the best possible manner, he said: 'Sir, I would advise you to put your

arguments logically; if you cannot do that, put them arithmetically—that is bad, but it is better than nothing.'

"A man was tried for stealing a watch. On the conclusion of the evidence for the prosecution, the prisoner was asked if he had any witnesses? The reply was 'None but his Maker, who knew his innocence.' The judge, after waiting a short time, addressed the jury as follows: 'Gentlemen, the prisoner is charged with stealing a watch; he calls a witness who does not appear. On the other hand—two witnesses saw him take the watch.'"

Yet one more instance of an unexpected issue of his irony.

"A very stupid jury were called upon to convict a man on the plainest evidence. A previous conviction was proved against him by the production of the usual certificate and by the evidence of the policeman who had him in charge. The judge summed up at great length. He told the jury that the certificate was not conclusive; that the question was entirely for them; that policemen sometimes told lies, and much else of the same kind, concluding as follows: 'And, gentlemen, never forget that you are a British jury, and if you have any reasonable doubt on your minds, God forbid that the prisoner should not have the benefit of it.' The jury retired, and were twenty minutes or more before they found out that the judge had been laughing at them, and made up their minds that the identity was proved."

Another admirable specimen of his ironical treatment of a counsel's strained arguments is recorded.

"Gentlemen, the learned counsel is perfectly right in his law, there is some evidence upon that point; but he's a lawyer, and you're not, and you don't know what he means by some evidence, so I'll tell you. Suppose there was an action on a bill of exchange, and six people swore that they saw the defendant accept it, and six others swore they heard him say he should have to pay it, and six others knew him intimately, and swore to his handwriting; and suppose, on the other side, they called a poor old man, who had been at school with the defendant forty years before, and had not seen him since, and he said he rather thought the acceptance was not his writing, why there'd be some evidence that it was not, and that's what Mr. — means in this case."

Besides being a good judge and all manner of other good things, this remark-

able man was a good son, and a good relative. He never married, and died not long after retiring from the bench, in the year 1858.

WISTERIA.

How tenderly the twilight falls
About our dear home's flowery walls,
Upon the garden bowers;
The breeze sighs over beds of bloom,
My darling, leave the dusky room,
Come out among the flowers.

Come forth, my wife, and stand with me
Beneath our favourite chestnut-tree—
The glory of our lawn—
Look up, dear heart, in skies afar,
How softly beams the evening star—
The garish sun is gone.

How clearly from the coppice floats
The brown bird's strain—its magic notes
Of joy and sorrow blent.
How sweetly from the southern wall
Delightful odours round us fall,
The rich wisteria's scent.

See, darling, in this tender gloom
The clusters of its purple bloom
Peep out amid the green;
A comely summer robe it weaves
Of sturdy twigs and tender leaves,
With splendid blooms between.

How rich and full a life must beat
In its green branches! fair and sweet
It flowered in the spring;
And yet, ere summer days are done,
It spreadeth to the summer sun
A second blossoming.

It seemeth unto us a type
Of love, spring-born, but summer-ripe,
Full-hearted love like ours,
That sweetly smiled on life's young spring,
Yet hath its fuller blossoming
In these maturer hours.

Our lives were like the spring-time boughs
Of this old tree, which wreaths our house
With purple twice a year,
No leafage green of worldly praise,
Or worldly wealth made glad our days,
But lonely love was dear!

Ah, darling! on this summer night
Our hearts brimful with deep delight,
We bless God as we stand
Beneath His arch of twilight sky
At rest, too glad to smile or sigh,
The happiest in the land.

Our tree of life is strong and full
Of leafage verdant, beautiful,
With blossoms in their prime,
For love, like fair wisteria flowers,
Brings, with full hands, to us and ours
A second blossom-time.

DOMESTICATED MOONSHINE.

If I were to tell you that one of the prettiest things I ever saw was a whale, you would probably think that my art education had been neglected. So I will not tell you anything of the kind. Only you may take my word for it, that if I had told you so the statement would have been perfectly correct.

It was quite a common whale too; not backed like a camel, nor bearing, so far as I remember, the faintest resemblance to a weasel. Quite an ordinary everyday mammal, with the usual elementary outline, or no outline, as though Nature had only just cast him in the lump, and the usual dull grey hide, as though he had only got on his first coat of paint; and the general unfinished look as of a very rudimentary vertebrate, which had come out on a trial trip before it had been quite decided of what size or shape or colour he should ultimately be, which distinguishes his useful, but not elegant race. He had not even that sublimity of size which in the pigmy eyes of man has no doubt a certain beauty of its own; for he was but a small monster, not forty feet long at the outside, a mere baby, popularly supposed by the crew of the Jessie Byrne to have run away from "school," and mistaken us for his mamma. Yet clumsy, shapeless, grey lump as he was, that ungainly gamboller presented, as a simple æsthetic fact, just one of the prettiest sights I ever had the luck to see.

It was in the North Pacific, just on the edge of the trades, and with a thin haze over the moonless sky, which besides suggesting the probability of a stronger breeze to-morrow gave its full value to a dark blue sea the intense phosphorescence of which I have never seen equalled in any part of the world. The Jessie Byrne was a fast sailer in light winds, and was slipping quietly along at the rate of a good seven knots an hour, leaving behind her a milky way of soft vaporous light, from out of whose swirling wreaths great moonlike jelly fish would every now and then shoot off at a tangent into the deep dark blue on either side, or a school of flying-fish flash up out of the water like a gleam of summer lightning, while the silver streak of the pursuer streamed swiftly on to intercept them as they fell. Suddenly we became aware of another gleaming track close alongside our own, and almost as wide. In another minute we had sprung across the deck, very nearly capsizing the binnacle compass in our excitement, and there, close under our starboard quarter, keeping easy way alongside us, not a boat-hook's length off, was our unexpected consort. Not another ship as we had at first premised must be the case, in spite of the absence of any visible mast or sail, but just our friend the baby mammal, trotting along by our side as confidently as though such a thing

as a harpoon had never entered the mind of man.

Clad all in silver was that baby monster. In living silver—such silver as they commonly keep exclusively for the making of Italian moonlight. Diamond studded was his gleaming mail wherever any little roughness of the skin, any small parasite or clinging scrap of weed, afforded pretext for a sharper sparkle. His shimmering mantle swept its long train in silvery folds till it melted into a mere white glimmer in the distant blue, and every now and then—Whoosh!—a fountain of flashing stars came leaping half-mast high against the dim blue sky.

I thought of that sheeny monster years later as the Indian mail tore screaming through that seething sea of light which floods the firefly-haunted flats just south of Ancona. I thought of them both the other days as I made my first acquaintance with this quaint device of domesticated moonshine, which is the latest contribution of Science towards that pleasant pursuit of turning night into day which nowadays seems quite to have lost its old seductive savour of naughtiness.

This time, however, it was nothing either monstrous or fairy-like which gleamed on my astonished sight as I plunged headforemost up one unexpected step and down another into the mysterious chamber in which a perennial "dark séance" appears to be going on for the benefit of neophytes of the new light. It was simply a little oblong slip of moonshine hung up against the wall, and bearing in plain black letters the homely and practical legend, "Good Beds." A very pleasant and comforting application this of the new invention, and one highly to be appreciated of post prandial wanderers or midnight arrivals in a strange town. Less satisfactory on the whole is the label which follows it, and which in letters of living light adjures the unwary wayfarer to "Beware the Dog." The idea of a ghostly Cerberus, invisible, inaudible, lying "promiscuously around" with unapparent tail only waiting to be trodden on, must be anything but reassuring to the unsophisticated mind.

By this time our eyes are getting accustomed to the darkness, and we begin to realise the fact that the great clock-face which now makes its appearance—looking like the full moon itself with ghost-time marked upon it in grim black figures—is not only luminous itself, but actually capable of giving off light for the illumination of

other objects. The good beds and canine caution, and sundry other mysterious announcements such as "Putney," "First Class," "Number Thirty-six," and so forth, have come and gone in appropriate phantom fashion without any apparent aid from mortal, or indeed other hands. But this moon has its man attached to it. The faint blue glare which serves to throw out the announcement of midnight throws up also with its pale and ghostly glimmer a dim and sketchy countenance, a mere suggestive hint or two of lip or nose or eyebrow, not very much more coherent than the general outline of a grin which the astronomical observation of our youthful days used to diagnose on the mild countenance of Madame Luna herself. And then at last comes in "Aladdin's lamp," and by its light our now fully educated eyes can see all the various objects in the little room almost as plainly as by day.

A very simple contrivance is Aladdin's lamp; yet, simple as it is, it is not possibly destined to work wonders of a very practical kind. It does not require rubbing; differing in that respect not only from its prototype, but from all ordinary phosphoric light producers. Seen by daylight, it is just a plain board, some two feet square, covered with a thick coat of rather coarse white paint. Brought into our dark cabinet from the sunny corner of the southern window in which it has been refreshing itself after its last performance, it resolves itself promptly into four square feet of domesticated moonshine, lighting up our little ten-foot square apartment with quite sufficient brilliancy to enable us not only to move about, but even to read print of any ordinary clearness. If I were a miner now, prodding away with my pick at a nice "fiery" seam with the prospect at any moment of driving its polished point into the very heart of one of Dame Nature's own private gasometers, charged to the muzzle with fire-damp, I fancy I should find this little glimmer of domesticated moonshine quite sufficient for my purpose. I should have a box of matches in my pocket of course, for Aladdin's lamp will no more set light to my pipe than to the fire-damp, and as for foregoing my smoke, merely because its enjoyment may probably result in the blowing into more or less minute fragments myself and perhaps a hundred or two of my fellows, that you will see at once is an absurdity not to be contemplated for a moment. But when it actually takes less trouble to adopt a precaution than it does

to neglect it, I am not—or at all events not always—so bigotedly independent as to refuse. And this Aladdin's lamp involves less trouble, not merely than an ordinary Davy, but than the simplest of tallow dips. Even a dip will want snuffing, or at the very least replacing when it is burnt out. Our new magic-lantern replenishes itself. You have nothing to do but just hang it up anywhere where the light can get to it, and immediately it sets to work to soak up such a store of light as it shall take at least five or six hours to give off again. If daylight cannot be got—and the stronger you can get it the better—any kind of artificial light will do just as well. A bit of magnesium wire burnt for a few seconds in front of an extinct Aladdin will brighten him up as effectively as the sun itself. This of course would be done at the office, and is the maximum of care and labour that could under any circumstances be required.

It seems rather odd—or might seem rather odd to anyone not accustomed to the ways of humanity in little matters of this kind—that among all the uses to which this new luminous paint has already been experimentally put, this coal-mining service should not appear, so far, to have been thought worth an essay. The first practical use to which it seems to have been put is the illuminating of clock and watch faces, and a very excellent purpose, too, especially for the sick room. Your modern night-light is not quite so ghastly an institution as the ancient rushlight shade, with its maddening little spots of light that so inexorably insisted on being counted accurately up before you could think of going to sleep, and never counted up twice to the same number, figure as carefully as you would. But even your modern night-light is an abomination in irritable eyes. People may say what they like about the necessity of light to life, but I am quite sure a little darkness is just as necessary too, sometimes. Let nurse have a nice little luminous clock to see when beef-tea and physic time come round, and a nice little luminous bottle to pour the dose out, and a luminous nightcap if she likes, that she may be able to read “to keep herself awake” without setting herself and me on fire by bobbing it into the candle every time she drops off. And let me rest my eyes, and leave off climbing up the ladders in the trellised wall-paper, and counting the ugly faces in the flowered bed-curtains, for an hour or two in peace and darkness.

That nightcap notion, by the way, or a

modification of it likely to be almost equally useful in its generation, has already been put into practice in the odd shape of an illuminated diver's helmet and dress. A curious spectacle that diver must present to the fishes patrolling the dark bed of old ocean in the midst of a little oasis of artificial moonlight of his own evolving. A wonderful help though in any of those grim investigations which follow on the sinking of an excursion steamer, or the immersion of a railway train, or any similar incident of nineteenth century engineering progress. I suppose there are a good many avocations more likely to commend themselves to the taste of persons of a sensitive nervous organisation than that of groping about under water for dead bodies in the dark. But a gentle phosphorescent glare from one's own person must add a certain crowning shuddering even to that.

The luminous buoys, on the other hand, are a very pretty conceit, and so are the luminous finger-posts for cross-country roads. I suppose finger-posts, by the way, are made of their usual inordinate height for the special benefit of stage-coachmen, who are the only human beings anywhere on a level with them. It might, indeed, be imagined that a stage-coachman would probably be able to find his way without their assistance. But that is being hypercritical, no doubt. At all events, those who are blessed with sufficiently long sight to read them at all will now be able to consult them as freely on the darkest night as in full sunlight. Should it ever occur to any reforming road surveyor to bring them within reading distance, the thing will be very complete.

Whether any particular advantage would be gained by following Professor Heaton's spirited example, and boldly painting our ships with luminous paint from stem to stern, is perhaps an open question. A very pretty sight a vessel so decked out would be, gliding ghostwise over the dark midnight waves. A trifle suggestive perhaps to the superstitious sea-going mind of Mynheer Vanderdecken and his phantom craft, but in point of picturesqueness, charming. The doubt is as to the safety of such a style of decoration. An Annual Wreck Register is a curious study, and in few respects more curious than in the conclusion to which its voluminous tables unquestionably point—that the more favourable is the condition for avoiding collision the more numerous are the collisions that occur. In dark nights and thick fogs ships somehow don't seem to see their way

to run into each other. On a bright clear moonlight night they manage it with ease and satisfaction. If every ship were really rendered luminous, so that on the darkest night it could be plainly seen, not only where she was, but exactly what course she was steering, it is to be feared that accidents of this kind might increase to an extent that might seriously affect the profits of our underwriters.

He was a bold man, too, who suggested the solving of the vexed question between gas and electricity for street-lighting purposes by the simple expedient of doing away with street lamps altogether, and, in place thereof, painting the house-fronts with a liberal coat of luminous paint. At its present price of eight-and-twenty shillings a pound this would perhaps hardly be an economy. But it is calculated that when the paint—which is at present a mere laboratory product—arrives, as no doubt it shortly will, at the stage of a commercial manufacture, this price will be reduced to five shillings, or even less. It is certainly a pretty notion enough, and one which, if carried out with assurance of a sufficient supply of daily sunshine to keep the thing going, must give quite a new aspect to the night side of our city life. But how about the dark days and the fogs? Would every householder have to keep, like the astronomer royal, a register of the number of hours per diem in which the sun has vouchsafed to shine, and when that register shows a blank to perform his duty as a good citizen by forthwith lighting a vast magnesium torch and dispersing the darkness from his own especial house-front as he does, theoretically, the snow on the patch of pavement before his own especial door? And would he be as punctilious and as prompt in the performance of the one duty as of the other? Shops and taverns, at all events, might be internally painted with it; the stored-up gaslight serving to carry out in much more economical fashion the favourite modern plan of leaving the lights burning all night and the shutter open as a precaution against thieves. Indeed, if the use of this curious paint for halls and staircases ever became at all general—as, except for its costliness, there really does not seem to be any particular reason why it should not—our friends of the burglarious persuasion will have but an uneasy, risky time of it.

Such an ornament for a staircase bracket now as this little statuette of Diana with which our present dark séance terminates.

and which gleams upon us as though we were so many nineteenth century Endymions surprised—so, far, of course, as nineteenth century “form” will allow us to be surprised by anything—by the visit of the chaste goddess herself, would be almost as objectionable as an invalid or a little dog to the gentleman with the crape mask and the jemmy under his arm, whose natural modesty of disposition would shrink from attracting public, or for the matter of that, private notice either.

I see the City Fathers are going to carry out the original design of Blackfriars in its full gorgeousness, and intend to crown each pier with an appropriate group of statues. Why not have them made luminous? So many groups of guardian angels lighting up path and roadway with their own mild effulgence. It would be the very poetry of street-lighting.

Two practical uses, at all events, the new paint, even in its present embryo stage, has already achieved. Uses, too, which make the apparent delay in experimenting upon its value in mining operations all the more remarkable. It is a “fact not generally known,” or at all events not very commonly borne in mind, that we have here in London a “fiery mine” of so very excitable a disposition that no artificial light of any description has ever yet been allowed to be brought even into its neighbourhood. Its product, however, is not coal, but rum. The rum-shed, as it is called, of the West India Dock covers a space of two hundred thousand square feet, with vaults of corresponding size, all crammed with huge casks of spirit, from every pore of which—and the most carefully closed have pores in plenty—the fiery vapour is for ever streaming out into the air, only begging for the smallest chance of converting the whole area of the docks, with their two hundred and fifty odd ships, and two or three hundred thousand tons or so of cargo, and their more or less incalculable stores of timber and tea, silk and sugar, cigars and cereals, coals and cotton, wine, wool, whisky, whale-fins, and what not, into the most magnificent bowl of snap-dragon ever imagined in infant nightmare. Into these fiery regions not even a “Davy” is or ever has been allowed to penetrate. Even the wharf along the side where the great puncheons are landed is forbidden to the approach of vessels, every cask being transferred from ship to shore in the company's own lighters. Each cask in that vast range of dim dark vaults is marked and

numbered, and on the right reading of these marks and numbers depends the efficient execution of every one of the numerous operations to which every individual cask has to be subjected before its contents can go forth for the mixing of the world's grog. How any one but an experienced Japanese juggler ever manages to perform this feat in the very brightest weather by the simple aid of a little plate of polished tin artfully turned and twisted to catch the solitary ray of highly diluted daylight which here and there filters down from the floor above, is a mystery by no means amongst the least wonderful of the many of which the visitor to this commercial paradise catches here and there a tantalising glimpse. In dull weather—and there is dull weather sometimes even at the East End of London—not all the tin in Cornwall can throw the faintest light on this interesting subject. So the East and West India Dock Company no sooner heard the merchant-magician passing through their street with his fascinating cry of "New lamps for old!" than they—metaphorically, of course—rushed out and invested eagerly. If an actual fog were to settle down to-day over the great rum-shed of the West India Dock, Jack need have no fear now of his grog running short on that account. The magnesium lamp would be set going for half an hour or so in the office, and then out would come a procession of porters, each with his four square feet of domesticated moonshine, and the work would go on as merrily as ever.

Jack is interested too, though of course in a very inferior degree, in that other anti-explosive experiment which has already been worked out to practical result. To be blown into little pieces must of course be to Jack a very minor misfortune compared with the stoppage of his grog. Still, so long as the avoidance of such a termination to his career involves no thought or trouble on his part, Jack would no doubt just as soon remain unblown-up if he can. So when he has once got over the idea of Aladdin's lamp being a regular lubber's lantern only fit to light a landsman to the lock-up, he will no doubt reconcile himself to its introduction into the magazine and the spirit-room, and other dark places, where little catastrophes of this kind will sometimes originate in the best regulated ships.

As for the illuminated compass-cards—which are another development of this ingenious invention—it won't much matter whether Jack cottons to them or not. All

he will have to do will be not to light the binnacle-lamps, and as of course there will not be any binnacle-lamps to light, he will find that comparatively easy.

What will be the ultimate result of the experiments set on foot by at least half-a-dozen different railway companies is still an open question. The Great Western, Midland, North London, and several others are all diligently studying the effect of the new paint when used for the interior of their carriages, as a means of automatic lighting up in their tunnels, and for short night journeys. But there are so many things to be considered besides mere utility in introducing any innovation into the working. I wonder how long the public and the Board of Trade, and Parliament itself, have been trying to induce the adoption of continuous brakes, and how many hundred thousand pounds of shareholders' dividends, to say nothing of the minor matter of passengers' lives and limbs, have been thrown away for the lack of them!

A pretty little invention certainly; whether the world in general ultimately takes to it for the lighting of its streets and its railway-carriages, the protecting of its sailors and its miners, and the frightening into fits—of honesty—of its burglars or not. Capable, no doubt, too, of still further development, scientific as well as commercial, though the untimely death of its originator, Mr. W. H. Balmain, which took place almost immediately after he had secured the first patent, has for the moment thrown a rather serious impediment in the way of both. And the theory of the thing is almost as pretty as the practice. Light, as we all know, or fancy we know, more or less, is the result and product of vibration. Now, just as there are certain combinations of catgut or metal, or even wood, so sensitive in their elasticity that when stricken by a sound-wave their responsive vibrations give out themselves an answering sound, so does Mr. Balmain's discovery present us with a combination—chiefly, I believe, of phosphorus and sulphur—so super-sensitive as to respond to the stroke of a ray of light, answering its vibrations by tiny counter-pulsations of its own, yet swift enough and vigorous enough to translate themselves into actual visible light. Fire a gun in the neighbourhood of a gong or bell, and gong or bell will give out an audible chime long after the sound of the original shot has died into silence. Flash a gleam of sunlight or limelight on an Aladdin's lamp, and the responsive echo will be vivid

enough to reach the brain, not through the ear, but through the eye, only dying slowly into darkness again as the disturbed atoms of the sensitive paint sink slowly to rest. At present the response is still somewhat faint and somewhat evanescent, a little too much of both perhaps for any but rather special applications. But the real difficulty lay in the original devising of a material which should echo back light-vibrations at all. To render it, now it is devised, just a very little stronger and a very little more lasting in its effects must surely be comparatively an easy task.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXXIII. THE OLD WOUND RE-OPENED.

A MONTH has passed since the trial, and during that period no person but Bertha has seen or conversed with Ranf. It is understood throughout the Silver Isle, although the details of the trial have not been made public, that a grave charge had been brought against the hunchback, of which he had completely cleared himself, and his judges had been generous enough to declare that in his answer to the charge Ranf had shown himself in an unexpectedly noble light. The character of these judges stands so high in the isle that implicit faith is placed in this declaration, the acceptance of which does much to clear away the prejudice which had existed against Ranf, and many of the islanders are anxious to make personal acknowledgment of their error. The hunchback, however, has not afforded them an opportunity; with his usual disregard of their opinion, in his favour or to his hurt, he has kept aloof from them.

The one person most anxious to see and speak with him is Margaret Sylvester. The trial has torn open the old wound in her heart, and she feels that she can never again know peace until she has learned all that it is in the power of the hunchback to impart of the history and fate of her beloved sister. In fulfilment of his promise Matthew has related to her some portions of the conversation concerning Clarice which took place years ago between Ranf and himself; in mercy to her he has omitted what it would most grieve her to hear, and all that she knows is that Clarice was living when they supposed her to be dead. Bitterly does she reproach herself for what.

in her agony, she declares was an act of desertion on her part. It was her duty to stop in the old land, and never to give up her search for her dear Clarice until she had found her or had been furnished with undoubted proof of her unhappy end. Matthew in vain attempts to console her, and is grateful to think that he has concealed from her all knowledge of her dear sister's shame. But Margaret, in the midst of her self-torturing, detects, with her shrewd woman's wit, that something is being hidden from her, and she sends Bertha to Ranf, with an imploring appeal that he will see her, and tell her all he knows of Clarice. She receives this message back:

"Not yet. I must choose my time. It will soon come, and then we will speak together. Be silent and patient, and trust in me."

It was possible to be silent, but not to be patient; and Margaret is now passing through the most unhappy days of her life. She feels that strange events are impending, and that Ranf, her friend and the friend of Evangeline, holds the threads in his hands; she can trust him, it is true, but what can he know of the love, the torture, that fills her heart? She wants to tell him her story; then he would pity her, and conceal nothing from her. It is an exquisite misery to her to know that she is powerless, that she can do nothing but wait. Night after night she dreams of Clarice, and in her dreams Harold, the handsome stranger who now lives with Mauvain, almost invariably finds a place. If no one else can satisfy her, why should she not go to him and ascertain whether the strange idea which passed through her mind when she and he met lately in the narrow lane has any foundation in fact, or whether the likeness she saw in his face to the face of one who is connected with the saddest episode in her life is merely accidental? Engrossed in the cares and duties of her new home, she and hers have been so occupied that she has had no opportunity of meeting him again; neither has she seen his friend Mauvain, in whose house she has lived since her arrival on the Silver Isle. She meditates upon this, and broods upon her misery until it is almost too great for her to bear.

In the meantime Mauvain and Harold are settled in the isle. They also have been so much engaged that they have had no time to go about; there was so much to do in the house and grounds, so much to alter, to suit Mauvain's fastidious

tastes, that they have had as yet no time to "cultivate the islanders," as they express it. Mauvain has brought with him a great number of cases containing such heirlooms, pictures, and other belongings as he has been able to save from the wreck of his fortune; the difficulty of arranging and placing these about the house and grounds has been increased by the circumstance that when he asked for the assistance of labourers on the isle he was informed that the islanders could not spare time for any but their own affairs. He has but three servants with him, and it takes a month to do what might have been done in a week. Harold and he resolve not to show themselves to the islanders until the house is in order.

The weeks have not passed without adventure or discovery. Harold one night is awakened by a tapping at his window; he rises and opens the window, and a white pigeon flies into the room. It is perfectly tame, and allows him to handle it.

"A carrier dove," says Harold, "fit messenger for Cupid. Is it by these means that my twisted friend carries on his love-affairs?"

An idea seizes him; he writes a message, and tying it under the wing of the pigeon, releases it. He stands at the window, watching its flight.

"To the mountain of snow," he says, as he follows with his eyes the direction of the bird. "Ranf will get my message if he be there."

The words he writes are these:

"Harold to Ranf: In what spirit shall we meet—if we meet again? In the spirit of friendship or enmity?"

The following night the winged messenger returns, with the message:

"Ranf to Harold: We shall meet again. I am your enemy till death."

Harold laughs in the solitude of his chamber.

"Ranf is a bold man. Certainly he cannot be accused of lack of courage. He reckons, perhaps, on the sympathies of the islanders, which assuredly are not with us. They lack courtesy, I am afraid, these simple folk. I noticed how, when Ranf's trial came to an end, they allowed me to depart without offering me food or drink; and I was thirsting for wine. Hitherto, Harold, your chief enemy has been your self. You have other enemies now. Well, it will give a zest to life. Pretty bird," he says to the dove, which he holds in his hand,

"there is blood upon your wing. Have I been too rough with you? It has never yet been my way with beauty or innocence." His eyes light here on the group of Ranf and Evangeline he had sculptured for Mauvain, and which Mauvain, despite his request, had set up in the grounds. "A fine piece of work, Harold. Tolerably faithful as regards the hunchback, though one would infer, from its contemplation, that Ranf had no soul. That is not true; the hunchback is something more than flesh and blood; I will do him that justice. Mauvain, I owe you what I may never be able to repay for this insult—aye, and for others which my too careless spirit allowed to pass by unheeded. We are equal, you and I, for we are gentlemen, with our own code of honour. Strange that I have not yet met Evangeline! Tomorrow I shall go in search of my fairy; to-night I will dream of her. Good-night, Ranf's messenger of hate." He releases his fluttering prisoner, and it gladly wings its way through the sweet air to the mountain huts. "I have heard," says Harold as he prepares to retire to rest, "that none but Ranf has had the courage to tread those heights. I know one who will dare them. The mountain is free."

The next morning, over breakfast, Harold and Mauvain speak of their plans. "It will be an act of courtesy," says Mauvain, "now that the house is in order, to let the islanders know that we shall be willing to exchange civilities with them. We are tolerably good society for each other, but we should die of weariness if left to ourselves."

"We are of one mind upon that," replies Harold. "Doubtless the islanders will rejoice at the opportunity of paying court to one so high in station as yourself. Does it not strike you, however, as singular that up to this day we have not been troubled with visitors?"

"They would scarcely come uninvited, Harold."

"Being possessed of really delicate instincts. You may be right. It is not I who am in question. It is to you, Mauvain, that certain things are due. Your rank, your station, your character, are entitled to consideration. Yet these islanders may require to be taught."

"We will teach them, Harold," says Mauvain, with a smile: "it is only necessary that we shall be seen."

"Let us be seen, then, by all means. The sun is out; shall we walk?"

But, although they show themselves in

their best attire and with the polish of their fine manners upon them, Mauvain does not receive the attention he believes to be his due. Those of the islanders with whom they come in contact show no disposition to form acquaintance with them. They look once upon the gentlemen, and do not seem to care to look again. To the questions graciously put to them by Mauvain and Harold, answers are received in monosyllables; the spirit in which they are met is the spirit of avoidance. The young are attracted to them; but it invariably happens that men or women of maturer age step between them and the children, or between them and the young women with whom they would converse. This uniform coldness of reception acts in an opposite way upon the two friends: Harold is amused at it; Mauvain is irritated.

"You regard it too seriously, Mauvain," says Harold, as they walk homewards; "the people require education. It is not to be endured that they should show themselves blind to our merits. For myself I care not. Nature is a companion in whom I am ever able to take delight; she is sufficient for me. But it is different with you. The society of fair women is a necessity of your being; you have never been able to live without them. I trust the stern morality of the islanders will not stand in the way of your pleasures."

"Harold?"

"Yes, Mauvain?"

"I am tolerably familiar with your light manner. Do not push it too far."

Harold gazes at his friend in astonishment. "Do you believe me insincere, then? Since when have you found me backward in friendship? Take heart, Mauvain. We shall not lack adventure in this isle. Trust me for that. What is not willingly given must be taken by force. Is not that idea sufficient to stir your blood? It stirs mine. I, for one, do not intend to die of stagnation. See—who comes this way? One of the fair maids of the isle—and alone! Fortune has not deserted us!"

What more he would have said remains unspoken; his words are frozen on his tongue. The girl who now stands before them is the living presentment of one whom he loved in secret in the years that are gone. He had spoken falsely when he said that love had never come to him. There was one to whom in the bygone time his tenderest thoughts had been given,

and for whose sake he would have sacrificed all that was dearest to him in life. And this maiden resembles her in a manner so startling that for a few moments he is deprived of the power of speech. But it soon returns to him, and he laughs almost in scorn of himself.

"It is incredible," he says aloud, "that such a materialist as I should believe in apparitions. Do not be alarmed, fair maid; we are mortals like yourself. But in truth you remind me of a friend; and we are strangers on the isle."

"I have heard of you," said the girl, with a frankness common to all the younger residents in the Silver Isle; "you live in our house."

"The voice is not hers," says Harold, gaily, "and the spell is broken. We live in your old house. Then your name is——?"

"Gabrielle."

"You have another."

"Sylvester."

"And your mother's name is Margaret."

"Yes."

"Pardon my abruptness," says Harold, gently, moving aside so that she might pass.

"There is nothing to pardon," says Gabrielle, walking past them.

"Still another question, if you will not think me rude. Were you born upon this isle?"

"Yes," replies Gabrielle, in surprise.

"That is well. The dream has vanished. I hope we shall meet again."

He bows with the grace that is nature to him, and presently Gabrielle is no longer in sight. Then Harold glances at Mauvain.

"My questions were pertinent, Mauvain? Confess, now, that they were not entirely out of place!"

Mauvain takes a jewelled snuff-box from his pocket, and regales himself with a pinch; then offers it to Harold. Harold accepts the courtesy laughingly, but says inly:

"Has Mauvain a heart, or what is called a heart?"

"You are thinking of something, Harold, in which I am interested," says Mauvain.

"I confess it, Mauvain. I was asking myself in what you believed."

"And unable to answer yourself? That betrays a lack of perception. I gave you credit for knowing me better. Shall I supply the answer?"

"Yes."

"Love."

"In its spiritual aspect?"

"I am a mortal, Harold."

"Mauvain, I am beginning to envy you. You are a gentleman, as the saying is. You are not only brave but rash where your self-love or honour is concerned, and I doubt not would give up your life in support of a conviction. And you value life, I know."

"It is the highest gift, Harold."

"Yet we are told that there is something higher, to which most men cling."

"So do not I. The present is my anchor. I leave theology to the priests."

"Long live to-day! I shall consider seriously whether it would not be more profitable to myself to turn epicure."

"It would add to your enjoyment of life, Harold."

"Indeed, I believe so—or it would, if one were born to the inheritance. For these things are not always matters of choice. Selfish men suffer least. Those who have no faith have all the world open to them. I would I were a fatalist: I would pluck the ripest fruit, without thought to whom it belonged. Reproached for taking what is not my own, I should answer, 'It is fate.' A convenient creed!"

"Harold, you wander from your theme."

"And my theme is——?"

Mauvain faces his friend with some disposition of seriousness, which lasts for a moment only. With a gay laugh he offers his snuff-box again.

"Mauvain," says Harold, harking back, "I asked you in what you believed. You supplied me with an answer which I decline to accept. It is impossible that a man shall live to your years without thought of the past, without dread of the future. If you had the realisation of a wish, what would it be?"

"That I might be young again, and live a hundred years. Speaking in earnest, Harold, you are growing sombre; it was not always so. There was a time when you accepted pleasure without question."

"Say that I seemed to do so, Mauvain."

"And did not betray the seeming. One must judge from the outside. If you choose to conceal your feelings, you must take the consequences. You smile through all the days, and suddenly you come to your friend and say, 'The smile was on my lips, but not in my heart.' How is your friend to judge you? He may say with fair reason, 'You have deceived me through all the days; you are deceiving me now.' Then at once is introduced into the friendly bond a sentiment which feeds like a worm upon the heart of friendship, and robs it

of its pleasant aspect. From that moment it becomes a burden. I do believe," says Mauvain, abruptly breaking off, "that I have allowed myself to be betrayed into a lecture. The effect of bad example, Harold. Reflect upon what I have said, and extract a lesson from it; else you will soon cease to be amusing. As for myself, take me as I am and for what I am, and be content—and grateful. You have wit enough to read me better than you profess to be able to do; have the wit to understand that I can read you better than you suppose. What there is in life that affects me closely belongs only to myself. Not to any living being do I choose to lay bare my heart. If I have opened a window in it through which you have hitherto not seen, I close it now, for ever. A pinch of snuff? So—now we are as we were; it will be your fault if things do not go on smoothly between us. I do not wish you to alter. Be yourself, as I have known you; but be careful not to go beyond the line of safety."

By the time they have arrived at this point in their conversation they have reached home, and the last words are spoken as they stand at a window overlooking the garden.

"A visitor, Mauvain," says Harold. "Our stroll has borne fruit. A woman, too, so the interview is likely to be pleasant."

He has already detected who the woman is who is now walking towards the house; but Mauvain's sight is not as keen as his.

"Young, Harold?"

"I am afraid not; she has a matronly walk. Shall we receive her?"

"Certainly, if she desires it. Play the host for me; my lecture has wearied me."

"You, also, are an actor, Mauvain," is Harold's thought, as he watches the progress of the woman; "but if you think you have deceived me, you yourself are grievously deceived. A fire is smouldering which any chance spark may kindle into a blaze. Not much is required to make me your deadly enemy."

To a servant who announces that a woman desires an audience, he gives instructions to admit her, and Margaret Sylvester enters the room. Her face is as white as death, but she has come in pursuance of a purpose which can no longer be delayed; the agony of her mind is so great that she cannot continue to endure it without an effort to satisfy the doubts which are racking her soul. She looks around the old familiar room with dim eyes; the action is mechanical, and

means nothing. She sees the form but not the face of Mauvain, for he has moved into the shadow; the only face she sees and recognises is that of Harold, with whom the purport of her visit is immediately connected.

He steps forward as she enters, and with a courteous motion of his hand invites her to be seated. She scarcely notices the courtesy, and for a few moments her agitation deprives her of the power of speech. Meanwhile, Harold waits in patience.

"Do you know me?" she asks, when her strength returns to her.

"We have met twice" replies Harold, gently: "the first time, you charmed me with your voice; the second, with your womanly kindness to an unfortunate."

"May I speak to you freely?"

"Freely."

"You have seen me twice, you say, within this isle. Look well into my face, and tell me if you have any remembrance of it in the past?"

Harold, obeying her, looks steadily at her. "It is not for me to say," he replies, with a thoughtful glance at Mauvain, who, having seated himself, appears to be paying but indolent attention to the dialogue. "The past stretches so far back, and my memory plays me treacherous tricks."

She feels that his answer is not honest; that it lacks sincerity. "Would you wantonly inflict torture upon an innocent woman, or upon any person who never by thought or deed did harm to you?"

"No; it is not in my nature."

"And yet you do not answer me. To what can I appeal? To your chivalry? To your humanity? If you knew my sufferings, you would pity me. I scarcely know how to approach the subject which brings me here to-day, to the house in which my children were born, and in which I have spent so many happy years. I beg you, by your sense of honour, by your sense of right and mercy and justice, to help me if you can. You are a gentleman; I am but a weak and most unhappy woman."

Harold turns suddenly to Mauvain. "Mauvain," he says, "this is the mother of the girl we met this morning. This is Margaret Sylvester."

Margaret looks towards Mauvain, whose face is still averted from her, and who acknowledges the introduction by a nod.

"You saw my daughter Gabrielle?"

"Yes, and spoke with her," says Harold. "It is seldom I have seen a fairer face.

You appeal to my chivalry; I thank you for the compliment; and to my humanity—not often, I am sorry to say, brought into play. If I speak lightly, find some excuse for me; it is my manner. Your appeal places me at a disadvantage. A woman's strength is in her weakness, and man is no match for her. Now, you have men in your household—a father, a husband, a son. Had any one of these come in your place, it would have been easy to answer him."

"They do not know of my visit. I am here of my own prompting."

"Is no person acquainted with your presence here to-day?"

"No person."

"You have friends outside your family who do not regard us with too much favour?"

"I do not understand to whom you refer."

"To Ranf the hunchback, for one."

"He is not aware that I have come to you."

At the mention of Ranf's name, Mauvain exhibits a closer interest.

"May I proceed?" asks Margaret.

"It would be churlish to refuse."

"I will speak more plainly. I am not a native of the Silver Isle. My girlhood's days were passed in your own land, where at the saddest crisis of my life I met my husband, then a stranger to me, and his father. I was worse than alone; I was in the power of a man who betrayed me, and who tore from me the being most dear to me. Even now, although I have children whom I love and a husband whose tender regard for me is as great as any woman could hope for—even now, in this peaceful isle, where want and worldly care are unknown, where we live honoured and respected, with almost a certain prospect of a happy ending to our days—even now, I feel that this being to whom I refer is more closely knit to my heart than those who call me wife and mother. She was my sister, and between us existed a love which made us one. I was older, wiser, stronger than she, and when our father died, it was I who took the place of parent and protector to one whose innocence should have been as a shield against the treacherous arts of villains who live to betray, and who bring shame to those who are weaker than themselves, and children in the experiences of the world. It was our unhappy lot, through our father's misplaced faith and confidence, to find

ourselves at his death in the power of an unscrupulous master who used what little talents we possessed to his own selfish advantage. I could have borne that; I did bear it; looking forward to the day when we should be of age and out of his power. This villain made love to my sister, and I taught him a lesson which prevented him from ever again insulting her. He was an ignorant, ill-bred man, with no pretensions to the title of gentleman. It happened that fatal fortune took us to a town in which our master hoped to enrich himself; he was a gambler, and there were gaming-houses in the town. We became favourites with the people, and he made money by the exhibition of our talents. We were called upon to perform before a company of gentlemen in a theatre which seems to me even at this distance of time the most beautiful on earth. I have not told you—we were travelling actresses, with no stain upon our name. Our lives were as pure as those of the highest ladies in the land; and in most places we met with respect. Our success was so complete in this beautiful theatre that it led to a most base and shameful betrayal. In the middle of the night my sister and I were awakened to dance and sing before two gentlemen with whom our master was gambling. At first I rebelled, but I was compelled to obey. Can I ever forget that night? Is it possible that I, loving my sister more dearly than ever woman was loved by man, can lose the remembrance of the smallest incident in that fatal night which tore my darling for ever from my side? The room to which we were conducted was but dimly lighted; our master was there, flushed with wine and excitement, and with him two gentlemen whose features are as familiar to me at the present moment as though my meeting with them occurred but yesterday in the sun's full light."

Margaret pauses, and looks straight at Harold with a meaning he cannot mistake. Harold meets her look without an attempt at avoidance, and says gently, "Go on."

"Only one of the gentlemen was playing with our master; the other came towards

us with a candelabra in his hand, and spoke in a tone so courteous that it was almost sufficient, if anything could have satisfied me, to allay my fears. Before he addressed us, this gentleman said a few words which in my after experience afforded a clue to his character. I do not remember to what they were an answer. His words were these: 'She can dance in shadow;' he was referring to my sister, who was almost asleep in my arms. 'Let her dance in shadow,' he said; 'it will form a finer picture.' None but an artist could have given expression to the words, and I judged afterwards that this gentleman was probably a painter or a sculptor."

"A shrewd guess," says Harold, observing that she pauses in the expectation of hearing him speak. "Your story is more than interesting, it almost recalls a dream of the past."

Margaret looks at him gratefully. "Is it necessary that I shall proceed?"

"What say you, Mauvain?" asks Harold. "Do you wish to hear what follows?"

"I leave it to you, Harold," replies Mauvain; "I know that I can rely upon your discretion."

"Proceed, then," says Harold to Margaret.

"To put a shameful construction upon what I afterwards heard," says Margaret, in a lower tone than that she has hitherto used, "almost seems as if I were casting dishonour upon my sister. The words that passed between our master and the gentleman with whom he was playing bore no meaning to my mind at the time. If I had rightly understood them, no power on earth could have prevented me from guarding and protecting my sister until death stepped in. But I forget! I forget! When vile unworthy means are used to accomplish a base purpose, love's armour is powerless for defence!"

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIXEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER IV. "CURTEIS SHE WAS, DISCRETE, AND DEBONAIRE."

THE world was nine months older since Daphne picnicked in the park at Fontainebleau, and the scenery of her life was changed to a fair English landscape in one of the fairest of English shires. Here in fertile Warwickshire, within three miles of Shakespeare's birth-place, within a drive of Warwick, and Leamington, and Kenilworth, and Stoneleigh Park, to say nothing of ribbon-weaving, watch-making Coventry, Daphne wandered in happy idleness through the low-lying water meadows which bounded the sloping lawns and shady gardens of South Hill.

South Hill was a gentle elevation in the midst of a pastoral valley. A long low white house, which had been added to from time to time, crowned the grassy slope, and from its balconied windows commanded one of the prettiest views in England—a landscape purely pastoral and rustic; low meadows through which the Avon wound his silvery way between sedgy banks, with here a willowy islet, and there a flowery creek. On one side the distant roofs and gables and tall spire of Stratford, seen above intervening wood and water; on the other a gentle undulating landscape, bounded by a range of hills.

It was not an old house. There was nothing historical about it; though South Hill, with between three and four hundred acres, had belonged to Sir Vernon Lawford's family since the reign of Elizabeth. There had been an ancient mansion; but the

ancient mansion, being an unhealthy barrack of small low rooms, and requiring the expenditure of five thousand pounds to make it healthy and habitable, Sir Vernon's father had conceived the idea that he could make a better use of his money if he pulled down the old house and built himself a new one: whereupon the venerable pile was demolished, much to the disgust of archaeologists, and an Italian villa rose from its ashes: a house with wide French windows opening into broad verandahs, delicious places in which to waste a summer morning, or the idle after-dinner-hour, watching the sunset. All the best rooms at South Hill faced the south-west, and the sunsets there seemed to Madoline Lawford more beautiful than anywhere else in the world. It was a house of the simplest form, built for ease and comfort rather than for architectural display. There were long cool corridors, lofty rooms below and above stairs, a roomy hall, a broad shallow staircase, and at one end of the house a spacious conservatory which had been added by Sir Vernon soon after his marriage. This conservatory was the great feature of South Hill. It was a lofty stone building, with a double flight of marble steps descending from the drawing-room to the billiard-room below. Thus drawing-room and billiard-room both commanded a full view of the conservatory through wide glass doors.

There were melancholy associations for Sir Vernon Lawford in this wing which he had added to South Hill. He had built it to give pleasure to his first wife, an heiress, and the most amiable of women: but before the building was finished the first Lady Lawford was in her grave, leaving a baby girl of two months old behind her. The widower had grieved intensely, but he

proved no exception to the general rule that the more intense the sorrow of the bereaved the more speedily does he or she seek consolation in new ties. Sir Vernon married again within two years of his wife's death, and, this time, instead of giving satisfaction to the county by choosing one of the best born and wealthiest ladies within its length and breadth, he picked up his wife somewhere on the Continent: a fact which in the opinion of the county was much in her disfavour: and when he brought her home and introduced her to his friends, was singularly reticent as to her previous history.

The county people shrugged their shoulders, and doubted if this marriage would end well. They had some years later the morbid satisfaction of being able to say that they had prophesied aright. The second Lady Lawford bore her husband two children, a boy and a girl, and within a year of her daughter's birth mysteriously disappeared. She went to the South of France, it was said, for her lungs; though everybody's latest recollection of her was of a young woman in the heyday of health, strength, and beauty; somewhat self-willed, very extravagant, inordinately fond of pleasure, and governing her husband with the insolence of conscious beauty.

From that southern journey she never came back. Nobody ever heard any explicit account of her death; yet after two or three years it became an accepted fact that she was dead. Sir Vernon travelled a good deal, while his maiden sister kept house for him at South Hill, and superintended the rearing of his children. Madoline, daughter and heiress of the first Lady Lawford, was brought up and educated at home. Loftus, the boy, went to a private tutor at Stratford, and thence to Rugby, where he fell ill and died. Daphne's childhood and early girlhood were spent almost entirely at school. Only a week ago she was still at Asnières, grinding away at the everlasting prosy old books, reciting Lafontaine's fables, droning out long sing-song speeches from *Athalie* or *Iphigenie*, teasing poor patient Miss Toby, domineering over Martha Dibb. And now her education was supposed to be finished, and she was free—free to roam like a wild thing about the lovely grounds at South Hill, in the water meadows where the daffodils grew in such rank luxuriance; and where, years ago, when she was a little child, and had crowned herself with a chaplet of those yellow flowers,

scarcely brighter than her hair, a painter-friend of her father's had called her *Asphodel*.

How well she remembered that sunny morning in early April—ages ago. Childhood seems so far off at seventeen. How distinctly she remembered the artist whose refined and gentle manners had won her childish heart. She had been so little praised at South Hill that her pulses thrilled with pleasure when her father's friend smiled at her flower-crowned head and cried: "What a lovely picture. Look, Lawford, would not you like me to paint her, just as she is at this moment, with her hair flying in the wind, and that background of rushes and blue water." But Sir Vernon turned on his heel with a curt half-muttered answer, and the two men walked on and left her, smoking their cigarettes as they went. She remembered how, in a blind childish fury, scarce knowing why she was angry, she tore the daffodil crown from her hair and trampled it under foot.

To the end of his visit the painter called her *Asphodel*, and one morning finding her alone in the garden, he carried her off to the billiard-room and made a sketch of her head with its loose tangled hair: a head which appeared next year on the line at the Royal Academy and was raved about by all artistic London.

And now it was early April again, and she was a girl in the fair dawn of womanhood, free to do what she liked with her life, and there were many things that she was beginning to understand, things not altogether pleasant to her womanly pride. She was beginning to perceive very clearly that her father did not love her, and was never likely to love her, that her presence in his home gave him no pleasure, that he simply endured her as part of the burden of life, while to her sister he gave love without stint or measure. True that he was by nature and habit selfish and self-indulgent, and that the love of such a man is at best hardly worth having. But Daphne would have been glad of her father's love, were the affection of ever so poor a quality. His indifference chilled her soul. She had been accustomed to command affection; to be petted and praised and bowed down to for her pretty looks and pretty ways; to take a leading position with her schoolfellows, partly because she was Sir Vernon Lawford's daughter, and partly for those subtle charms and graces which made her superior to the rank and file of school-girls.

Yet, though Sir Vernon was wanting in

affection for his younger daughter, Daphne was not unloved at South Hill. Her sister Madoline loved her dearly, had so loved her ever since those unforgotten summer days when the grave girl of nine and the toddling two-year-old baby wandered hand-in-hand in the shady old gardens, and seemed to have the whole domain of South Hill to themselves, Sir Vernon and Lady Lawford being somewhere on the Continent, and the maiden aunt being a lady very much in request in the best society in the neighbourhood, and very willing to take the utmost enjoyment out of life, and to delegate her duties to nurses and maids. The love that had grown up in those days between the sisters had been in no wise lessened by severance. They were as devoted to each other now as they had been in the dawn of life: Madoline loving Daphne with a proud protecting love; Daphne looking up to Madoline with intense respect and believing in her as the most perfect of women.

"I'm afraid I shall never be able to leave off talking," said Daphne upon this particular April morning, when she had come in from a long ramble by the Avon with her apron full of daffodils; "I seem to have such a world of things to tell you."

"Don't put any check upon your eloquence, darling. You won't tire me," said Madoline in her low gentle voice.

She had a very soft voice, and a slow, calm way of speaking, which seemed to most people to be the true patrician tone. She spoke like a person who had never been in a hurry and had never been in a passion.

The sisters were in Madoline's morning-room, sometimes called the old drawing-room, as it had been the chief reception-room at South Hill before Sir Vernon built the west wing. It was a large airy room, painted white, with chintz draperies of the lightest and most delicate tints—apple-blossoms on a creamy ground; the furniture all of light woods; the china celadon or turquoise; but the chief beauty of the room its hot-house flowers—tulips, gardenias, arums, hyacinths, pansies, grouped with exquisite taste on tables and in jardinières, on brackets and mantel-piece. The love of flowers was almost a passion with Madoline Lawford, and she was rich enough to indulge this inclination to her heart's content. She had built a long line of hot-houses in one of the lower gardens, and kept a small regiment of gardeners and

boys. She could afford to do this, and yet to be Lady Bountiful in all the district round about South Hill; so nobody ventured to blame her for the money she spent upon horticulture.

She was a very handsome woman—handsome in that perfectly regular style about which there can be no difference of opinion. Some might call her beauty cold, but all must own she was beautiful. Her profile was strongly marked, the forehead high and broad, the nose somewhat aquiline; the mouth proud, calm, resolute, yet infinitely sweet when she smiled; the eyes almost black, with long dark lashes, sculptured eyelids, and arched brows perfect in their pencilling. She wore her hair as she might have worn it had she lived in the days of Pericles and Aspasia—simply drawn back from her forehead, and twisted in a heavy Greek knot at the back of her head; no fringed locks or fluffiness gave their fictitious charm to her face. Her beauty was of that calm statuesque type which has nothing to do with chic, piquancy, dash, audacity, or any of those qualities which go such a long way in the composition of modern comeliness.

All her tastes were artistic; but her love of art showed itself rather in the details of daily life than in any actual achievement with brush or pencil. She worked exquisitely in crewels and silks, drew her own designs from natural flowers, and produced embroideries on linen or satin which were worthy to be hung in a picture-gallery. She had a truly feminine love of needlework, and was never idle—in this the very reverse of Daphne, who loved to loiter at ease, looking lazily at the sky or the landscape, and making up her mind to be tremendously busy by-and-by. Daphne was always beginning work, and never finishing anything; while every task undertaken by Madoline was carried on to completion. The very essence of her own character was completeness—fulfilling every duty to the uttermost, satisfying in fullest measure every demand which home or society could make upon her.

"I'm sure you'll be tired of me, Lina," protested Daphne, kneeling on the fender-stool, while Madoline sat at work in her accustomed place, with a Japanese bamboo table at her side for the accommodation of her crewels. "You can't imagine what a capacity I have for talking."

"Then I must be very dull," murmured Madoline, smiling at her. "You have been home a week."

"Well, certainly, you have had some experience of me; but you might think my loquacity a temporary affliction, and that when I had said my say after nearly two years of separation—oh, Lina, how horrid it was spending all my holidays at Asnières—I should subside into comparative silence. But I shall always have worlds to tell you. It is my nature to say everything that comes into my mind. That's why I got on so well with Dibb."

"Was Dibb a dog, dear?"

"A dog!" cried Daphne, with a sparkling smile. "No, Dibb was my school-fellow—a dear good thing—stupid, clumsy, innately vulgar, but devoted to me. 'A poor thing, but mine own,' as Touchstone says. We were tremendous chums."

"I am sorry you should make a friend of any innately vulgar girl, Daphne dear," said Madoline gravely; "and don't you think it rather vulgar to talk of your friend as Dibb?"

"We all did it," answered Daphne with a shrug; "I was always called Lawford. It saves trouble, and sounds friendly. You talk about Disraeli and Gladstone; why not Dibb and Lawford?"

"I think there's a difference, Daphne. If you were very friendly with this Miss Dibb, why not speak of her by her christian-name?"

"So be it, my dearest. In future she shall be Martha, to please you. She really is a good inoffensive soul. Her father keeps a big shop in Oxford Street; but the family live in a palace on Clapham Common, with gardens, and vineries, and pineries, and goodness knows what. When I call her vulgar it is because she and all her people are so proud of their money, and measure everything by the standard of money. Martha was very inquisitive about my means. She wanted to know whether I was rich or poor, and I really couldn't inform her. Which am I, Lina?"

Daphne looked up at her sister as if it were a question about which she was slightly curious, but not a matter of supreme moment. A faint flush mounted to Madoline's calm brow. The soft dark eyes looked tenderly at Daphne's eager face.

"Dearest, why trouble yourself about the money question? Have you ever felt the inconvenience of poverty?"

"Never. You sent me everything I could possibly wish for; and I always had more pocket-money than any girl in the school, not excepting Martha; though she took care to inform me that her father

could have allowed her ten times as much if he had chosen. No, dear; I don't know what poverty means; but I should like to understand my own position very precisely now that I am a woman, don't you know? I am quite aware that you are an heiress; everybody at South Hill has taken pains to impress that fact upon my mind. Please, dear, what am I?"

"Darling, papa is not a rich man, but he" — Madoline paled a little as she spoke, knowing that South Hill had been settled on her mother, and her mother's children after her, and that, in all probability, Sir Vernon had hardly any other property in the world—"he will provide for you, no doubt. And if he were unable to leave you much by-and-by, I have plenty for both."

"I understand," said Daphne, growing pale in her turn; "I am a pauper."

"Daphne!"

"My mother had not a sixpence, I suppose; and that is why nobody ever speaks of her; and that is why there is not a portrait of her in this house, where she lived, and was admired, and loved. I was wrong to call Dibb vulgar for measuring all things by a money standard. It is other people's measure, as well as hers."

"Daphne, how can you say such things?"

"Didn't I tell you that I say everything that comes into my head. Oh, Madoline, don't for pity's sake think that I envy you your wealth—you who have been so good to me, you who are all I have to love in this world. It is not the money I care for. I think I would just as soon be poor as rich, if I could be free to roam the world, like a man. But to live in a great house, waited on by an army of servants, and to know that I am nobody, of no account, a merè waif, the penniless daughter of a penniless mother—that wounds me to the quick."

"My dearest, my pet; what a false, foolish notion! Do you think anybody in this house values you less because I have a fortune tied to me by all manner of parchment deeds, and you have no particular settlement, and have only expectations from a not over-rich father? Do you think you are not admired for your grace and pretty looks, and that by-and-by there will not come the best substitute that modern life can give for the prince of our dear old fairy tales, a good husband, who will be wealthy enough to give my darling all she can desire in this world?"

"I'm sure I shall hate him, whoever

he may be," said Daphne, with a short, impatient sigh.

Madoline looked at her earnestly, with the tender motherly look which came naturally to the beautiful face when the elder sister looked at the younger. She had put aside her crewel-work at the beginning of this conversation, and had given all her attention to Daphne.

"Why do you say that, dearest?" she asked gravely.

"Oh, I don't know, really. But I'm sure I shall never marry."

"Isn't it rather early to make up your mind on that point?"

"Why should it be. Hasn't one a mind and a heart at seventeen as well as at seven-and-twenty? I should like well enough to have a very rich husband by-and-by, so that, instead of being Daphne, the pauper, I might be Mrs. Somebody, with ever-so-much a year settled upon me for ever and ever. But I don't believe I shall ever see anybody I shall be able to care for."

"I hope, darling, you haven't taken it into your foolish head that you care for someone already. School-girls are so silly."

"And generally fall in love with the dancing-master," said Daphne, with a laugh. "I think I tried rather hard to do that, but I couldn't succeed. The poor man wore a wig; a dreadfully natural, dreadfully curly wig; like the pictures of Lord Byron. No, Lina; I pledge you my word that no dancing-master's image occupies my breast."

"I am glad to hear it," answered Madoline. "I hope there is no one else."

Daphne blushed rosy red. She took a gardenia from the low glass vase on her sister's work-table, where the white waxen flowers were clustered in the centre of a circle of purple pansies, and began to pick the petals off slowly, one by one.

"He loves me—loves me not," she whispered softly, smiling all the while at her own foolishness, till the smile faded slowly at sight of the barren stem.

"Loves me not," she sighed. "You see, Fate is against me, Lina. I am doomed to die unmarried."

"Daphne, do you mean that there is someone?" faltered Madoline, more in earnest than it might seem needful to be with a creature so utterly childlike.

"There was a man once in a wood," said Daphne, with crimson cheeks and downcast eyelids, yet with an arch smile

curving her lips all the while. "There was a man whom Dibb—I beg your pardon, Martha—and I once met in a wood in our holidays—papa would have me spend my holidays at school, you see—and I have thought since, sometimes—mere idle fancy, no doubt—that he is the only man I should ever care to marry; and that is impossible, for he is engaged to someone. So you see I am fated to die a spinster."

"Daphne, what do you mean? A man whom you met in a wood, and he was engaged—and——! You don't mean that you and your friend Miss Dibb made the acquaintance of a strange man whom you met when you were out walking," exclaimed Madoline, aghast at the idea. "Surely you were too well looked after for that! You never went out walking alone, did you? I thought Frenchwomen were so extremely particular."

"Of course they are," replied Daphne, laughing. "I was only drawing on my imagination, dearest, just to see that solemn face of yours. It was worth the trouble. No, Lina dear, there is no one. My heart is as free as my shuttlecock when I send it flying over the roof scaring the swallows. And now let us talk about your dear self. I want you to tell me all about Mr. Goring; about Gerald. I suppose I may call him by his christian-name, as he is to be my brother-in-law by-and-by."

"Your brother, dear."

"Thank you, Lina. That sounds ever so much nicer. I am so short of relations. Then I shall always call him Gerald. What a pretty name!"

"He was called after his mother, Lady Geraldine."

"I see. She represented the patrician half of his family, and his father the plebeian half, I believe? The father was a Dibb, was he not—a money-grubber?"

"His father was a very worthy man, who rose from the ranks, and made his fortune as a contractor."

"And Lady Geraldine married him for the sake of his worthiness; and you and Gerald are going to spend his money."

"Mr. Goring and his wife were a very united couple, I believe, Daphne. There is no reason why you should laugh at them."

"Except my natural malice, which makes me inclined to ridicule good people. You should have said that, Madoline; for you look as if you meant it. Was the contractor's name always Goring?"

"No; he changed his name soon after his marriage, and took the name of his wife's maternal grandfather, a Warwickshire squire."

"What a clever way of hooking himself on to the landed gentry," said Daphne. "And now, please dearest, tell me all about Gerald. Is he very nice?"

"You may suppose that I think him so," answered Madoline, going on with the fashioning of a water-lily on a ground of soft grey cloth. "I can hardly trust myself to praise him, for fear I should say too much."

"How is it that I have seen no photograph of him? I expected to see half-a-dozen portraits of him in this room alone; but I suppose you have an album crammed with his photos somewhere under lock and key."

"He has not been photographed since he was a school-boy. He detests photography; and though he has often promised me that he would sacrifice himself so far as to be photographed, he has never kept his word."

"That is very bad of him," said Daphne. "I am bursting with curiosity about his looks. But—perhaps," she faltered, with a deprecating air, "the poor thing is rather plain, and that is why he does not care to be photographed."

"No," replied Madoline, with her gentle smile; "I do not think his worst enemy could call him plain—not that I should love him less if he were the plainest of mankind."

"Yes, you would," exclaimed Daphne, with conviction. "It is all very well to talk about loving a man for his mind, or his heart, and all that kind of thing. You wouldn't love a man with a potato-nose or a pimply complexion, if he were morally the most perfect creature in the universe. I am very glad he is handsome."

"That is a matter of opinion—I don't know your idea of a handsome man."

"Let me see," said Daphne, clasping her hands above her head, in a charmingly listless attitude, and giving herself up to thought. "My idea of good looks in a man? The subject requires deliberation. What do you say to a pale complexion, inclining to sallowness; dreamy eyes, under dark straight brows; forehead low, yet broad enough to give room for plenty of brains; mouth grave, and even mournful in expression, except when he smiles—the whole face must light up like a god's

when he smiles; hair darkest brown, short, straight, silky?"

"One would think you had seen Mr. Goring, and were describing him," said Madoline.

"What, Lina, is he like that?"

"It is so difficult to realise a description, but really yours would do for Gerald. Yet, I daresay, the image in your mind is totally different from that in mine."

"No doubt," answered Daphne, and then, with a half-breathed sigh, she quoted her favourite Tennyson. "No two dreams are like."

"You will be able to judge for yourself before long," said Madoline; "Gerald is coming home in the autumn."

"The autumn!" cried Daphne. "That is an age to wait. And then, I suppose, you are to be married immediately?"

"Not till next spring. That is my father's wish. You see, I don't come of age till I'm twenty-five, and there are settlements and technical difficulties. Papa thought it best for us to wait, and I did not wish to oppose him."

"I believe it is all papa's selfishness. He can't bear to lose you."

"Can I be angry with him for that?" asked Madoline, smiling tenderly at the thought of her father's love. "I am proud to think that I am necessary to his happiness."

"But there is your happiness—and Mr. Goring's—to be considered. It has been such a long engagement, and you have been kept so much apart. It must have been a dreary time for you. If ever I am engaged I hope my young man will always be dancing attendance upon me."

"Papa thought it best that we should not be too much together, for fear we should get tired of each other," said Madoline with an incredulous smile; "and as Gerald is very fond of travelling, and wanted change after the shock of his mother's death, papa proposed that he should spend the greater part of his life abroad until my twenty-fifth birthday. The separation would be a test for us both, papa thought."

"A most cruel, unjustifiable test," cried Daphne indignantly. "Your twenty-fifth birthday, forsooth! Why, you will be an old woman before you are married. In all the novels I ever read the heroine married before she was twenty, and even then she seemed sometimes quite an old thing. Eighteen is the proper age for orange-blossoms and a Brussels veil."

"That is all a matter of opinion, pet. I don't think young lady novelists of seventeen and eighteen have always the wisest views of life. You must not say a word against your father, Daphne. He always acts for the best."

"I never heard of a domestic tyrant yet of whom that could not be said," retorted Daphne. "However, darling, if you are satisfied, I am content, and I shall look forward impatiently to the autumn, and to the pleasure of making my new brother's acquaintance. I hope he will like me."

"No fear of that, Daphne."

"I am not at all sure of winning his regard. Look at papa! I would give a great deal to be loved by him, yet he detests me."

"Daphne! How can you say such a thing?"

"It is the truth. Why should I not say it? Do you suppose I don't know the signs of aversion as well as the signs of love? I know that you love me. You have no need to tell me so. I do not even want the evidence of your kind acts. I am assured of your love. I can see it in your face; I can hear it in every tone of your voice. And I know just as well that my father dislikes me. He kept me at a distance as long as ever he could, and now that duty—or his regard for other people's opinion—obliges him to have me at home, he avoids me as if I were a roaring lion, or something equally unpleasant."

"Only be patient, dear. You will win his heart in time," said Madoline soothingly. She had put aside the water-lily, and had drawn her sister's fair head upon her shoulder with caressing fondness. "He cannot fail to love my sweet Daphne when he knows her better," she said.

"I don't know that. I fancy he was prejudiced against me when I was a little thing and could scarcely have offended him; unless it were by cutting my teeth disgustingly, or having nettle-rash, or something of that kind. Lina, do you think he hated my mother?"

Madoline started, and flushed crimson.

"Daphne! what a question. Why, my father's second marriage was a love-match, like his first."

"Yes, I suppose he was in love with her, or he would hardly have married a nobody," said Daphne in a musing tone; "but he might have got to hate her afterwards."

At this moment the door was opened,

and a voice, full, round, manly in tone, said: "Madoline, I want you."

Lina rose hastily, letting her work fall out of her lap, kissed Daphne, and hurried from the room at her father's summons.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

A MANTEL-PIECE.

IN the house of Mr. David Ross, at Lahore, I had seen bits of Mooltan pottery so exquisite of colour, so graceful in the form and grouping of their ornament, that I resolved to buy some specimens if the chance came in my way. I am quietly convinced that Providence intends me to go everywhere before I die, and in calmness I awaited the decree to visit Mooltan. It came, and it was obeyed without surprise. Those who would travel into Scinde have half a day to wait at this famous but secluded town. All my servants vanished within half an hour, on pretence of buying warm clothes. I threw myself upon the kindness of a Parsee store-keeper, who showed that extreme courtesy and intelligence in which I have never known his race to fail. And I am perfectly pleased to find an opportunity of expressing this opinion of a people, whose very readiness to oblige often exposes them to annoying misconceptions.

The Parsee knew all about earthenware—my belief is that he knew all about everything, from the authorship of the Book of Job to the proper use of the Trevelyan gambit. They are awfully clever, these Parsees. The store-keeper entrusted to me his only son, a pretty boy clad in silken raiment and a gold-embroidered cap, who spoke English like a volume of Macaulay's essays. This child mounted one of my horses, and conveyed me to the "pot-bank," as we say in Staffordshire. Beneath an avenue of peepuls, we passed along the high city wall. Very grand they are still, these memorials of Sikh rule, great barriers which leave nought visible betwixt the earth and sky excepting domes and minarets which pierce the canopy of blue. Arches and gateways break the line here and there. Through the open portal, as in a frame, one sees the dusky narrow street, cleft by sudden torrents of a light that glows and dazzles. In sunshine and shade the many-coloured throng streams ceaselessly. Under the trees upon our right, graceful girls, most ungracefully trowsered, weave and wind and roll their silk on sticks. I do not at all understand

the operation, but it is pretty to observe. The soft and flimsy skeins, red, yellow, or purple, are stretched in foot-wide ribands, as it were, from peg to peg for a dozen yards. They glint in specks of sunshine, and the girls pass to and fro, parting them with staffs, and shyly glancing at the strangers as they move. My little Parsee could have explained it all, no doubt, but I did not ask. What on earth does it matter? Here is a pretty scene, a glow of light and colour, shapely young creatures moving under green leaves; what need to enquire more closely? Be satisfied! Admire and thank Heaven for a glimpse of beauty.

We reached our destination on an edge of waste land, riven with such pits and deep sunk ways, bristling with such mounds and broken walls, as Miss Meteyard describes in her sketch of an early English pot-bank. I saw rows on rows of lovely vases, tiles, basins, objects of every shape, set out to dry. One marvelled at their delicacy of form. It is in this point that the Indian artist generally fails. His sense of colour lies beyond our rivalry, but in shape he falls below the Chinaman. Anything complicated and incorrect he loves, and he thinks himself to have attained the utmost perfection when he has violated every Grecian rule of taste. It is not so with Muhammad Hussein. His sense of form is as true as his feeling for colour, and that he has gathered unconsciously from the sky, the trees, the weather-stained battlements, the girls at their silk, and all the panorama of bright life about his door. If he consults a glass, as I doubt not he does, the artist may occasionally find a motif in the contemplation of his own perfect face and admirable costume.

I remember writing of the man that same night I met him. His beauty, to a painter's eye, absorbed me even to forgetfulness of the charming things around. I do not write of an imaginary character. Muhammad Hussein is producing pots and pans at this moment, and he is perfectly well-known. A Persian by birth, he has carried into exile processes not forgotten but neglected by the Indian potters, and the success of his productions is raising the whole tone of art at Mooltan. If you, reader, wish to possess a specimen of earthenware that shall light your room with a blaze of tints, rejoice the eye with a form classic but unconventional, and a decoration finished, smooth, and new, he will supply it at a price which you, in your astonish-

ment, will call ridiculous. I am very sure that Mr. Lang, the Deputy Commissioner of Mooltan, will be pleased to be your agent. He cherishes the rising fame of his city, and I myself, who have not the pleasure of knowing him personally, am indebted to his zeal for the safe transport of my purchases. The mantel-piece—that of which I write, for I have another more ambitious, but, perhaps, less striking—may be described in the utmost brevity. Bunches of flowers, white or sky-blue in colour, lie on an indigo field. Between the plaques are inserted writings in the Persian characters. I have not yet chanced to entertain a pundit who can read these inscriptions, but I see that Muhammad Hussein has not faithfully executed my commission. I told him to introduce the grand refrain of the nineteenth chapter of the Koran—is it the nineteenth by-the-bye of which the words run after every verse: “Which of the Lord’s mercies will ye ungratefully deny?” Whatever be the text he has substituted, it is certainly nothing like this, though my little guide explained with a scrupulous exactitude of grammar, and the man quite understood. For a long while it puzzled me to suggest a cause for this alteration, but in one of my moods of semi-consciousness the truth was revealed.

Muhammad was justly flattered to receive an order direct from “Belati.” Many fine things had he turned out for sahibs resident in India, but I was the first who, coming from England and returning shortly, had preferred the art of Mooltan to that of our boasted manufacturers. So he talked a good deal of the commission I had given him. In the coffee-shop frequented by his countrymen and by wandering Afghans of the Shiah sect, he exhibited his designs, and sketched examples of florid calligraphy with a stick upon the sandy floor. In a short time, the jealous company of native potters heard an exaggerated story of my doings. Muhammad is no favourite, of course. In the first place, he is a stranger; in the second, he is successful; in the third, he is a heretic. Most of the potters, in this neighbourhood at least, are Moslem, for the mystery was not indigenous of growth. Though lax in their religious zeal, they profess the Sunni, or orthodox confession, and their hatred of a Shiah is as warm as any Turk’s, if he be a rival in business. Time went on, and my plaques were exposed, as is the custom, on a wall. The indignation of rivals, gradually swelling, fairly boiled over when

Muhammad set up the tiles inscribed according to my order. Here was a Shiah dog quoting the most favourite of holy texts—quoting it, too, in the hateful Persian character—for the whim of an infidel who could have no other object but to mock at Islam. Such impiety was a challenge to the faithful. Every Friday the orthodox Moollah preached upon one aspect or another of this question. The lightest sin of all was adulterating the pure Arabic of Mahomet by transcription into other tongues; but this alone merited death. At the present time this same controversy agitates Madras. The Moollah did not blame me beyond other Kafirs, but he observed that in the hell to which all Moslem heretics are doomed, a special place would be excavated in the hottest corner for the man who built my mantel-piece.

One day, after such a sermon, the less quiet spirits of the audience, bachelors and ne'er-do-wells, withdrew to coffee-shop and bhang-house for meditation on holy things. Here the minister's address was reviewed with increasing animation. A fakir, who made his protest against Kafir rule by stripping every rag from his foul person at the doorway of the bhang-shop, declared the will of Heaven: Muhammad Hussein's tiles must be destroyed, and he himself, if possible. After a due consumption of hasheesh the party sallied out, with sticks and stones. Reaching the "bank," in two or three quick volleys they smashed every bit of earthenware exposed upon the Persian's wall. He was not at home, but his mother was. I had the privilege of seeing that beldame, and I can quite believe that her onslaught was more terrible than that of most heroes of epic. Knife in one hand, veil clutched in the other, she rushed forth to avenge this injury. The assailants dispersed, with laughter and cries, galloping over the waste land, jumping the ditches and the walls. Amongst them was an Afridi camel-driver in the service of some Pathan merchants visiting the town—a tall dashing youth, smooth and sinewy as a panther. Stimulated by a quantity of bhang much greater than his head could carry, he retired at such a pace as kept him just outside the old dame's reach, and chaffed her. She followed grimly, raising every now and then a breathless scream for help. Absorbed in the composition of humorous remarks, the Afridi did not notice how the neighbours were mustering. When he perceived his danger they had almost surrounded him. The "native"

becomes ferocious in the defence of property, as many trespassing sahibs have discovered. After scurrying here and there, the Afridi escaped, but not without damage. He ran for life down a causeway which had high banks on either side, the avengers following. But a Pathan mountaineer has few to match him in a race, and they tailed behind. Suddenly, the way was blocked by a stone archway, with walls on either side. Upon one hand rose a lofty bank, on the other lay a ditch. The Afridi put his shoulder to the rotten door, pressed it open easily, entered, and closed it with a stone.

He found himself in a garden, of the sort affectioned by rich natives. High walls surrounded it, with a kiosk on every face. A shallow canal, faced with marble, ran through the midst, but it was dry and weather-stained. Flowering shrubs and lofty trees grew in rectangular thickets, intersected by tiled walks. The Oriental's notion of a garden is different to ours. What he seeks, first of all, is shade, then the murmuring of water; a carpet and a pipe-stand are reckoned next, I think, and for their enjoyment a kiosk is needful. Then his soul demands flowers of strong perfume, and the sum of human happiness is gained when the Eastern sister of Amaryllis smiles at him from a neighbouring carpet. The garden thus beloved does not commonly adjoin the house, nor is it used indiscriminately. Awkward meetings might take place, and the privacy of female life could not be maintained. The Afridi was not surprised to find his paradise deserted. He crept cautiously from thicket to thicket, and so reached the marble pleasure-house, which occupies the centre—an open building, approached by steps. Machinery, simple but efficient, pours a flood of water into the fountains, cascades, and marble channels which surround the colonnade, but they all were dry. The Afridi thought he might rest himself, whilst his pursuers dispersed. He stole a few oranges and sucked them. Then, deeply meditating, under the influence of heat and bhang he fell asleep beneath the marble dome. The strange events that then occurred to him he related to the magistrate next day.

For the young zealot had been recognised, and when, at night, he was re-entering the serai, where lodged his master, the police caught him like a partridge in a net. With most of those implicated in the destruction of my tiles, he made his appearance at the

court next day. All produced alibis, a thing of course—no man in India is so poor as to be unfurnished with an alibi at need. And the magistrate convicted them duly, one after another, till he came to our hero. That mountaineer was very much excited. With enthusiasm he confessed his guilt, adding that when God has approved a deed, it is not for man to punish it. Such words are heard with attention in a land where the Deity's name is not lightly uttered, where the fancied commands of Heaven too frequently lead to murder upon earth. The magistrate asked an explanation, and proudly the prisoner replied: When lying in the summer-house, he had a vision. An old man, taller than the trees, appeared before him, saying: "The infidel shall be broken like the potsherds of Muhammad Hussein. For himself, fear not! Death is like the bursting of the bud in the pomegranate, when the sweet flower escapes. The joys of the martyr (ghazi) had no end." Thereupon two virgins stood before the sleeper. Their beauty was incomparable, and one said to the other: "Who is this, and how comes he in the garden?" And the other answered, in a voice like that of water, when it laughs beneath the roses: "He is a true believer. Fortunate will be the houris who receive him at the gate!" Then the first spoke again: "Let us give him a token, that he may remember us!"

"They passed away," cried the prisoner, "but here, here are heavenly gifts I found upon my bosom!" He drew a pair of enamelled bracelets from his waistcloth, and shook them above his head. The police closed round him, and his fellow-prisoners drew back in alarm.

When the excitement in court had quieted, the magistrate asked various questions, which were answered not unwillingly. The prisoner declared he had not possession of the bracelets when entering the garden. No human artisan could make such lovely things. He would rather die than allow an infidel to touch them, but if a holy man were found he might show them to the court. No delay occurred in fulfilling this condition—the profession of holiness is so well stocked in India that experienced practitioners can be obtained at a moment's notice. The bangles were received in a consecrated cloth, and shown to the magistrate. They proved to be costly specimens of Delhi enamel, set with gems. That the prisoner had bought them was an absurd supposi-

tion; that he had stolen or found them did not seem probable. The magistrate scrutinised them without remark; when he had finished, the bar asked permission to see, and the holy man went round with his treasures. At that moment came a rich trader of Mooltan, interested in some business before the court, and sat down at the lawyer's table. He had just heard an outline of the strange story, when the bracelets were paraded before him. The old man started—snatched them from the Moollah—and examined them with wide and greedy eyes.

"You recognise those jewels, sir," observed the magistrate.

"No," the merchant answered steadily, though his whole arm shook as he returned them. "They are handsome, but I do not know the manufacture."

It was no one's business. All knew that Selim Ibn Batula had a garden near the potter's field, and it was understood that he had both wives and daughters. But if he did not claim the bracelets—why, every man knows his own property. The Afridi was condemned to a month's imprisonment and a fine; pending his release, the jewels lay in custody of certain holy men.

This is why Muhammad Hussein did not put the writing I had ordered into my mantel-piece. I have a great curiosity to learn what became of the Afridi, his bracelets, and his houris; but the rest of the story has not been revealed to me.

CONTRASTS.

CONTRASTS! they take it as a graceful theme,
Gay children, playing at the feet of song;
The young hearts only knowing change and wrong,
As the dark shadows on the dancing stream,
Or the vague terrors threatening in a dream,
Where the thick-coming fancies mating throng
'Neath morning's steady glow to fade ere long;
So to frank youth life's clouds and sunlight seem.
But we, outworn by the march of life,
Faint, with the burthen, fearful of the goal,
Baffled and beaten in the endless strife
That tires the heart and crushes down the soul;
Embittered, worn, thwarted, and broken thus,
How does the hard word, "contrasts," sound to us?

Have we not shivered as the garish light
Dazzled across our darling's death-cold brows?
And shrunk to see the crimson summer rose
Glowing and flaunting where the cross stands white,
And all we loved lies buried out of sight?

Have we not felt how hard the task-work grows,
When loud and shrill the victor trumpet blows,
And our lost battle dies away in flight?

Have we not yearned for Fortune's least worst gift,
While her crowned favourites waste their lavish
store?

Have we not learnt down Fate's black stream to
drift,

While they laugh careless on the further shore?
What keener contrast! phrase for pastime given?
Life's bitter riddle to be read in heaven!

MY LITTLE TOUR IN WALES.

PART I.

NOT "our" little tour. We all went—Emma, and Adolphus, and George, and Edith, and "Woffles," as well as myself. Only baby and Charlotte and the twins were left behind. So, as far as that goes, I might use the collective pronoun with a perfectly clear conscience. And as for the paying, that was poor Adolphus's affair altogether, as it always was. I call it my little tour simply because I was responsible for it. If it had not been for me "Mr. Adolphus Styffecote and fam." would have spent the six weeks' holiday, annually granted by a considerate government to its valued servants of the Procrastination Department, on the Rhine or among the glaciers, or would have repaired their exhausted energies by imbibing untold floods of superannuated egg-water at Ham-burg, or sparkling ink from the iced brunnen of the Black Forest. Ten years ago, when Mr. and Mrs. Adolphus Styffecote, as yet undignified by the supplementary "fam.," started modestly for their little bridal-tour through Normandy, Adolphus endeavoured to console his companion for the somewhat circumscribed limits of that journey by conducting her step by step through the elaborate calculations by which he had already satisfied himself that, come what might, the tenth annual return of that happy occasion would find them in a position prudently to indulge in a real European tour. Alas! poor Adolphus had reckoned, not without his host, but without his guest. George, and Mary, and "Woffles," and the rest, had all been duly provided under the "come what might." Even the twins, who it must be confessed had been but partially included in the estimate, had been happily counterbalanced by the opportune stroke of luck which gave Adolphus his promotion to the senior class fully twelve months before the ordinary time. Where poor Adolphus's calculations were out was in reckoning that he had married one sister, whereas, in fact, he had married two.

Which really, when you come to think of it, was rather hard upon him. A sister-in-law, especially when young, amiable, and good-looking, is a very charming possession, no doubt, but she is not exactly one of those indispensable articles of furniture without which no family mansion can be considered complete. Especially when the family mansion is circumscribed in size,

and evinces a disposition to furnish itself in the department of animated nature with at least sufficient promptitude. So if Adolphus did not regard with absolute enthusiasm his unexpected acquisition in that line, that is a lack of appreciation for which after all he may perhaps be pardoned.

And I am forced to admit that my otherwise irreproachable brother-in-law is somewhat deficient in that respect. Not that he has ever for a moment failed in the most precise and punctilious performance of his duties as host, elder brother, guardian, chaperon, and so forth. Being mortal, it is of course conceivable that he should fail in any duty that may come upon him, but it could assuredly be only under the condition that the world of which he is so distinguished an ornament should previously have failed in its own duty of turning round. So when at Aunt Jemima's death in the very middle of the honeymoon the eternal fitness of things clearly proclaimed to him the necessity of supplementing his pretty and demure young bride with a saucy young tomboy of a sister, poor Adolphus accepted the situation with precisely the same dignified resignation with which he would have mounted the scaffold or taken his seat upon the bishops' bench of the House of Lords.

And from that day to this he has performed its duties with an exemplariness simply exasperating. I could not have been more carefully looked after, or more properly provided for, or more conscientiously kept in order, if he had been a whole Areopagus of maiden aunts. That is Adolphus's way of entering his protest against destiny. And a very aggravating way it is.

It is only quite recently that I found out a way of retaliating. I came of age the other day, and stepped duly into the possession of the hundred and fifty pounds a year that it appears constitutes my private fortune. Of course the first thing I did was to insist upon contributing something at all events towards the expenses of my keep. I did not take much by my insistence. But I did learn something. Hitherto, when I have owed him any special grudge for snubbing me about what he is pleased to call my tomboy propensities, or talking ridiculous nonsense about fuzzy fringes and high-heeled boots, my only resource has been to pull his whiskers, or brush his hat the wrong way, and call him

"Dolly." Now I endeavour to show my gratitude in a practical manner by refusing my glass of wine after dinner, or staying at home from the theatre, or by making some other little attempt to lighten the burthen upon him. Poor Adolphus! It would be a very grievous offence that could not be sufficiently avenged in that way.

But when it came to doing the magnanimous in the matter of the famous tour, and staying at home with baby and Charlotte and the twins, I got snuffed out with remarkable promptitude. He did not even condescend to argue the point. The only question, he proceeded calmly—after a perfectly parenthetic "Nonsense, my dear!" delivered with just that show of rebuke with which a well-balanced mind receives a wholly irrelevant interruption from an only partially responsible individual—the only question lay between Holland and Wales or Scotland. If we really wished to go abroad the financial situation might no doubt be made to accommodate itself to a month or two among the Mynheers and the windmills. But mountain air was an object, especially for Emma, who is not so strong as she might be. So in due course the question was decided; the trunks packed, the younger olive-branches billeted upon old Nurse Corfield, settled down for the last half-dozen years as housekeeper to her widowed son in a dear little farm in Surrey, the house handed over to an opportune old lady from Devonshire in town for a month's physicking, and we ourselves at the Paddington station in ample time for the 4.45 express to Llangollen.

And here I score one against Adolphus at last. He is to meet us on the platform. At the very last moment an important matter has turned up at the department, involving not merely large public interests, but the private and personal hobby of an actual M.P., a strong supporter of government too, and more ominous than all, one of those dreadful new men who don't understand the game and won't play according to the rules. The credit of the department is at stake, and Adolphus knows but too well that if there be a man capable of maintaining it, it is himself. If that outrageous new member is really to be baffled, and the important question properly postponed, he is the man by whom the task must be undertaken, even at the cost of leaving his women-kind to find their way to Paddington alone. And Adolphus acquits himself triumphantly. I can see that before he is half-way across the booking-office by the way in which he

apologises to the too enthusiastic porter who knocks off his hat with somebody else's portmanteau as they race neck and neck for the platform. It has been a severe encounter. The new man, with his ignorance of etiquette, his disregard of the rules of the game, and above all his absolute contempt for the eternal fitness of things, has been almost too much for even the trained skill of the Procrastination Department. Instead of half-past four, it is within two minutes of half-past six when he finally makes his appearance. But every hair of his whiskers is radiant with the sense of an arduous public duty conscientiously performed. He quite beams upon the station guard as that polite but peremptory official stands with one hand on the open carriage door, and the other holding his whistle within half an inch of his lips as he glances at the great station clock already pointing to the fatal, and observes with a slightly reproachful emphasis upon the adverb, "Step in, sir—if you please." Then suddenly he pauses thunder-stricken, and exclaims with unwonted energy:

"Why, bless my soul! Where is Margaret?"

"Step in, sir—if you please," replies the guard irrelevantly, but significantly; with the adverb in unmistakable italics.

"It's all right, dear," explains Emma from within.

"It's all right, Dolly," echoes a triumphant feminine treble from—alas! poor Dolly!—the third-class compartment next door.

"Step in, sir—if you please," cries the despairing guard once more, with the adverb this time in the very biggest capitals; and before poor Adolphus with the very last scintilla of satisfaction discharged from his crestfallen countenance has sufficiently recovered his scattered senses to even attempt resistance, he has somehow been induced to step in whether he please or no, the door is closed, the shrill shriek of the guard's whistle is answered by one deep growl from the engine, the long line of carriages glide imperceptibly into motion, and we are quickly off upon our little tour.

Poor Emma! I hope she is not being held too severely responsible for my sins. And what I should like to know would be the good of wasting ever so many pounds in dragging a nurserymaid about the country for six weeks, merely that my lord's sister-in-law might indulge in the dignified donothingness of the first-class. So I am going to play nursemaid this time, and

earn my keep; and if Mrs. Sanderson owes me a grudge for cutting off her outing, and Adolphus's very wig turn white with horror at the outrage on his hospitality, George and May are well satisfied with the exchange at all events; and as for Woffles, I should like to see Mrs. Sanderson's face if that enquiringly-minded young person were to commence the journey by making serious preparations to climb up on her venerable shoulders with a view to exhaustive exploration of the mysterious black holes, through which by-and-by the lamps will make their appearance, as she forthwith proceeds to do with Auntie Maggie.

As for comfort—well, our compartment is not quite so palatial in appearance as that next door. But our humble third-class compartment is large, airy, and clean; our cushions are soft, our ceiling is lofty enough to defy the most frantic efforts on the part of the investigative Woffles to sweep out the deserted lamp-holes with the feather trimming of her new hat, even when held up at the full stretch of my arms. And as for doubtful company, we have got the carriage to ourselves, and—

But here I seem for the moment to have reckoned without my host. The whistle has sounded, the train is actually in motion, when a sudden chorus of "Now sir!—Look out, sir!!—Hold hard, sir!!!" breaks out from guards, porters, and general lookers-on, and a cheery voice replies, "All right, young people, go ahead; don't wait for me. Catch you before you get to Reading." And then the door is twisted suddenly open, and a curly head in a wonderful shapeless dab of bright grey flannel, closely followed by a broad pair of shoulders similarly clad, plunges precipitously in amongst us. Woffles avails herself of the opportunity with characteristic promptitude. With a shout of delight she jerks the new hat from her own head on to that of the new comer, and is within an ace of following it herself. Luckily, my wrists are strong. Woffles alights on the seat, heels uppermost, but unfractured. I hear a smothered exclamation, "Brats! by Jingo." There is a fresh little chorus outside of "Hi!—Hold on, sir. Stand back, there!" and so forth, and then our door is slammed to with considerable emphasis. A still more emphatic slam echoes from the door of a compartment or two farther on, and as the train clanks swiftly out of the station, the cheery voice came floating back to the

indignant platform superintendent: "Ta, ta, old gentleman. Don't cry! I say; send my hat after me by wire, will you?"

Emma says I spoil these children. I wonder, if I did, how much of the flannel young gentleman's hat would, by the time we get to Reading, be available for transmission "by wire" or otherwise. George is for screwing up his new fishing-rod, specially purchased for the benefit of the Llangollen trout, and passing on the delinquent thatch, as he terms it, to the window of its owner's compartment half a carriage off. Edith opines that it is a nasty vulgar thing, and had better be dropped out of window altogether. Woffles protests energetically that it is her own especial property, the legitimate spoil of her own bow and spear, and incontinently proceeds to empty into it a choice collection of pebbles, amassed in the course of her geological researches in the Square garden, without which she has stoutly refused to travel even to the sea-shore. If the flannel young gentleman has any sense of chivalry, and ever learns the trouble it costs me to preserve his property, he will never wear it again on any less exalted occasion than a Sunday, or a Bank Holiday at the very least!

On the whole, I am not sorry when we arrive at Reading, and the rescued head-gear is triumphantly handed over to the guard for restoration to its rightful owner. And then comes my turn for discomfiture. The tall figure of the guard has hardly disappeared from the window when a taller takes its place, and I am politely but firmly requested to descend and take my place in the aristocratic compartment next door. I produce my ticket, and point to the fatal "Third-class" very legibly printed thereon. My brother-in-law thanks me politely, puts the ticket in his pocket, and, with a stiff little bow, hands me his. If his servant has been left behind, he informs me, it is his business to take her place. He will take charge of the children.

Will he? Well, yes. I am not sure but that, after all, it may be a useful experience. So I sternly suppress a tendency to untimely mirth, and with a solemnity as profound as his own, thank him gravely for his courteous consideration, and take my place by Emma's side. Is Adolphus just a little astonished at my prompt submission? I almost fancy that he is. Has he the slightest idea of what is before him? I decidedly fancy that he has not. "You are a noble fellow, Adolphus," I say gushingly,

as he turns hastily from the door at the sound of the starting whistle; "and remember, if any real necessity should arise, you can always stop the train by pulling the cord over the right-hand window."

"Oh, Maggie!" cried Emma, as the train once more moves on again. "What ever will he do with them?"

"That is not the question," I reply gravely.

"Maggie! what do you mean? Not the question?"

"Not at all. The question is what they will do with him." And then we abandon ourselves to the situation, and in the intervals of Homeric laughter, listen eagerly for the sounds of revolution in the next compartment.

Eight-and-thirty minutes pass away, and the crisis has not yet come. As we draw up at the Oxford platform Adolphus presents himself at the carriage-door to enquire after us, with a politeness as unruffled as ever. I cannot say quite so much for his neckcloth, which is somewhat incoherent, or of his collar, whereof one end hangs limply down, and the other stands out wildly at right angles; or even his whiskers, in the fierce upward twist of which, so different from their usual decorous curl, I recognise the unmistakable handiwork of Woffles. Happily, however, he appears for once blissfully unconscious of these slight derangements, and once more bells clamour and whistles scream, and imperative voices with sublime superiority to mere ordinary rules of sedentary grammar startle the belated soup-absorber with hoarse cries of "Take your seats—going on!" and we are away for another hour's run, to Leamington.

"Perhaps he'll manage them after all, Maggie," says Emma, with a little note of conjugal triumph in her tone.

"Perhaps," I answer, with sisterly dubiety; and at that moment—

Fl'p, fl'p, fl'p—flutter, flutter, flutter—a dark crimson flag comes streaming past the window, making Emma, whose nerves are delicate, jump half out of her seat with its suggestions of danger-flags, accidents, and sudden destruction in a variety of uncomfortable forms.

"Don't be frightened, dear," I say reassuringly, capturing the flapping silk and handing it to her. "It's only Joseph's handkerchief, not his coat. He's alive—so far."

"That is Edith," says Emma, pointing to

the motto, "Love to Auntie," embroidered in the centre in straggling stitches two inches long.

"Probably. And this"—as admission is demanded by a huge pudgy hand ingeniously constructed by stuffing one of poor Adolphus's gloves with the latest intelligence page of his *St. James's Gazette*—"this is George."

Presently something which sounds very like a tiny shriek of "Mamma!" is brought in through the open window, and Emma, jumping up in a panic, is just in time to see the last of Woffles as that enterprising young person is withdrawn forcibly in at her own window again, frantically brandishing to the last something that looks extremely like papa's gold glasses.

"Don't you really think, dear," asks Emma, as poor Adolphus duly appears at Leamington, the merest dishevelled remnant of a once well-starched government official—"Don't you really think we had better let Maggie go back to those young monkeys again?"

But Adolphus is firm. He has pulled up the window on the other side, so that there is no fear of any further effort at self-immolation on Woffles's part. And as for himself, he is quite prepared to perish at his post. Is there anything wrong about him that these young men are laughing in that vulgar way? His neckcloth—dear! dear! So it is. And his collar? Humph! And his— Tut! tut! He really must speak seriously to those children. But as for— And then a shapeless grey hat appears suddenly over Adolphus's shoulder, and a cheery voice proclaims aloud, with appropriate nasal emphasis:

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! Found among the wheels of the Birmingham express, a young female tourist, of prepossessing appearance, and suicidal tendencies. If anybody—"

But the proclamation proceeds no further, for Adolphus faces suddenly round, and Emma turns white and gives a little cry, and I myself utter a small gasp of astonishment and horror, for there is the flannel young gentleman with his neckerchief untied, and the shapeless hat well on the back of his curly head, and in his arms, grimy, tumbled, but perfectly undisturbed, Woffles!

For the first time in our long acquaintanceship I have the opportunity of seeing my reverend brother-in-law without the glass in his left eye. I have never been able to get a distinct answer from Emma on the subject, but my personal belief is

that he sleeps in it. Now, in the extremity of his surprise and dismay, it has actually fallen, and hangs tinkling against his waistcoat button, where his fingers hover round it helplessly as he gazes with blind eyes at the startling apparition, and murmurs at intervals, "By Jove!"

Emma and I give one simultaneous cry of "Oh, Woffles! you dreadful child!" and start forward with open arms to receive possession of our rescued property. The rescued property herself exhibits neither enthusiasm nor penitence. She simply takes with her left hand an eager grip of the flannel young gentleman's chestnut curls, and with her right holds high above her head an oblong green morocco case with elegant gilt mountings and monogram, and in the tone of one who has done the State some service, and who knows it, triumphantly exclaims:

"I dot him!"

Then, with many apologies for the interference, the flannel young gentleman explains how, on his way to the buffet, he observed the young lady in question in the act of scrambling down off the platform after papa's cigar-case, and in a moment of possibly mistaken enthusiasm had dived after and recaptured her. He hopes he has not been indiscreet. Is not a family man himself. Hasn't the slightest idea of the feelings of a parent, so if he has unintentionally put his foot into it—

"P-r-r-r-t! Take your seats—going on! Now, sir, if you please!"

We are off again, before any of us recovered breath enough to break in upon the stream of "chaff" and thank the flannel young gentleman for his opportune aid. I think the guard must imagine that we are all gone crazy together, for no sooner does the sharp appeal of his whistle arouse us from our momentary stupefaction, than we at once plunge into a general scramble for places, with a recklessness worthy of Woffles herself. Even Adolphus no longer insists upon the further performance of his usurped functions of nursemaid, and resumes his original seat with a submissiveness which almost disarms my triumph. Poor Emma, who has succeeded in regaining possession of her rescued infant, hovers undecidedly between the two compartments, and only suffers herself to be hustled into her proper place at the very last moment, and then only with the perfectly unconcerned young delinquent still clasped closely in her maternal arms. As I in my turn tumble out,

more or less headforemost, to resume my own humble station, the young gentleman in the flannel dittoes is already making off towards his particular compartment. But he is no doubt smitten with sudden doubts as to the possibility of reaching it, for, as I plunge, I hear a sotto voce "Phew!" and as the door slams to behind me, a voice over my shoulders enquires, cheerily:

"Pretty game, Puss in the Corner. Anybody missing?"

And there is the flannel young gentleman already comfortably installed in the corner opposite George before I have well recovered my feet after my scramble.

The ice is pretty well broken, fortunately. Indeed, I should fancy that the more brittle properties of that peculiarly English product were very commonly illustrated in the neighbourhood of our new fellow-traveller. Of course I feel bound, as the official representative of the family, to tender our thanks in form for the eminent service he has rendered us in the rescue of Miss Woffles from an untimely end. He receives them with a sort of cheerful solemnity; is much pleased to find he has not interfered with any little family arrangement for the euthanasia of superfluous branches; observes in passing that Miss Woffles appears to be very well put together, and it would be a pity to break her up before she was done with, and so glides gently off into a hope that Mr. and Mrs. Woffles, who seemed—didn't, I think?—a little scattered about by the occurrence, might soon recover themselves.

He is duly reassured on that point also, and somehow—I really don't know how, for we are only four-and-thirty minutes on the road, and I am not given to sudden confidences with chance acquaintances of the opposite sex—before we reach Birmingham there is not, as my metaphorical fellow-traveller would say, an inch of surface available for skating purposes anywhere in the neighbourhood. Arguing, as my Balliol brother says, from the particular to the general—and I know that is the right way of arguing either for men or women, so it must be right in this case—I should say civil-engineering was about as, well as self-possession a profession, as a young gentleman need be blessed withal. My particular young civil-engineer has been studying it in Birmingham in a practical hammer-and-tongs way, you know; burning his fingers with hot locomotives, and dropping railway girders on his toes, and going in

for the burning fiery furnace business in a general way for the last two or three years to make an accomplished blacksmith of himself. And now he is out of his time—it doesn't in the least occur to him that he can be out of his place!—and has just been taking his last locomotive up the line, and is going back to Birmingham to start on his holiday. Where did we say we were going? Llangollen, and—— Not settled yet? How very odd! Just like himself. Wonder whether—— By Jove! Here we are. And with a brisk good-night, a polite hope for a pleasant journey, and a tender message to Miss Woffles, the flannel young gentleman has disappeared long before the train has stopped, leaving me to recover my breath as best I may.

Which is really not till we are well past Wolverhampton. It is pitch dark now. Either there is no moon or the very particularly foul and pestilent congregation of vapours which here represents the air is much too dense to let a ray of hers escape through it. And all around the low black roof of solid smoke is aglow with the glare of countless huge chimneys. Every now and then a nearer blaze than usual lights up the wide-eyed faces of the astonished children, or makes them grotesque with flitting shadows from strange piles of heaving cranks and slowly-revolving wheels, that start out suddenly from the gloom and beckon ghostly to us and vanish suddenly into the gloom again. Once we pass a tall dark pile that has no smoke or flame and is not a chimney, but tapers away dimly till it ends in a glittering golden cross, and I almost find myself wondering what a church can be doing—down here! This is burning-fiery-furnace-land in very truth, and it is a positive relief to glide at last out of the murky glare into the cool dark fields, with the dim white mist curling here and there in the pale starlight over some low-lying meadow or meandering stream.

And so we glide along, so smoothly and quietly in our big "bogge" carriage that one hardly realises the fact of being actually in an express train. And one by one Wellington and Shrewsbury and Gombowen, and half-a-dozen other places whose unfamiliar names mix up oddly in the half sleep in which my new acquaintance in the flannels is pursuing me relentlessly over miles of blackest country with a flaming chimney-pot on his head, are reached and passed, and at last the long

smooth run comes to an end, and we are all stamping, and stretching, and rubbing our eyes on the almost deserted little platform at Ruabon.

THE ROMANCE OF THE CAFÉ D'ITALIA.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I. A DESPERATE RUFFIAN.

THE criminal court was stiflingly hot that sultry summer's afternoon. The sun beat down fiercely through the windows upon the heavy horse-hair abominations wherewith tyrant custom still does its best to addle the brains of the British bench and bar, and threw more light upon the piles of musty brief-papers piled on the desks, or lurking within the half-open jaws of the solicitors' brief-bags, than ever they received from the minds or exposition of their learned holders; and bench, bar, solicitors, ushers, police, and public all simmered gently in their own heat while awaiting the return of the jury who had retired to consider their verdict.

My lord, on the red cushions which cover the bench, dozed behind the leader in the Times: it would, perhaps, have been injurious to public morality and the dignity of his office had he used a penny publication to conceal his slumbers; elderly barristers who were "in" the case which stood next on the list were studying their briefs, while young barristers, who were not "in" anything, pushed their wigs far back on their foreheads (wigs fresh and white as the unboiled cauliflower), and drew caricatures on ends of draft-paper; and the public—a greasy, unwashed public it was, the public which is wont to hang about the doors of criminal courts at assize times, most of its members looking as if they had themselves drunk lavishly of the corrective justice administered to the prisoner within—this public munched an infinity of apples, conversed in whispers, and stared at the prisoner at the bar.

He was a desperate ruffian this prisoner at the bar, at least the counsel for the crown had certainly made him out to be so, and the learned one who defended him, by no means demurring to the charge, had cheerfully admitted that his client was a desperate ruffian. In fact, he had taken the bull by the horns, and seeing that there was no sort of use in denying the actual deed of which his client was accused, had done his best to assist the prosecution to show that a murder had been committed of

such cold-blooded and unprovoked atrocity, that it was impossible to regard the deed as the work of a sane man, and so to establish successfully a plea of insanity.

There could be no doubt about the murder or its atrocity. The prisoner at the bar was described as a Frenchman, by name Gustave Mas, speaking very good English, and his age by his own account was forty, but his hair was quite grey, and he might, from his whole appearance, have been a man fully twenty years above that age.

He was, at the time of the murder, and had been for some years previously, a waiter in a small restaurant somewhere in the foreign quarter of London not many hundred yards from Leicester Square.

While the jurymen are yet weighing the question of the prisoner's death or life, let me tell you something of the scene and circumstances of the murder.

The Café d'Italia is, as its name would imply, a haunt of members of the Italian colony in that part of London. It is kept by an Italian; its waiters are, most of them, Italian; its cookery is Italian (with a truly Italian abundance of oil); its specialty is Italian wine; and, lastly, the subtle odour of garlic which pervades its dining-room is as thoroughly Italian as the majority of the frequenters of the house.

Not that the Café d'Italia is without a sprinkling of English. A certain number of City men dine there, who know their London well, and not a few briefless barristers and young solicitors, who have discovered that they can dine as well there for two shillings as they can for ten at the more pretentious West End restaurants.

A swing-door, near which, Dryad-like amid a forest of asparagus, sits a neat dame de comptoir, admits you from the street into a long low room furnished with a dozen small tables. The wall-paper is dingy and the furniture plain, but the Café d'Italia burns in winter a cheery British coal fire at the end of the long room, and has always a cosy homely appearance.

It was on an early summer's evening some weeks before the day of the trial in question, in this very room, that Gustave Mas had, as prosecution and defence agreed and as he himself did not attempt to deny, done the deed for which he was then being tried for his life.

The circumstances were as follows :

At about seven o'clock on the evening of the murder two Englishmen had entered

the café. They were both men of middle age, well dressed, and a stranger would probably have guessed them to be, as they both were, "something in the City." They had sat down opposite to each other at a table, ordered dinner and champagne, and the order had been taken and their dinner served by Gustave Mas. This is some of the evidence as to what occurred.

Madame Pirri, the dame de comptoir, and wife of the proprietor of the café, said :

"I saw the gentlemen come in. They were both strangers, I do not remember having ever seen them there before. There were two waiters: Gustave Mas, and Giuseppe Nava, an Italian. The Englishmen sat down at one of Mas's tables. Mas took their hats and coats, and I did not notice anything unusual in his appearance or any agitation in his behaviour. Both the gentlemen appeared to be perfect strangers to him."

James Johnson said: "I am a member of the Stock Exchange. I had a slight acquaintance with the deceased, Reginald Richards. He was of the same profession as myself. On the day of the murder he asked me to dine with him, saying: 'We will try a new place which I have heard well spoken of,' and he took me to the Café d'Italia. The prisoner waited on us. Apparently he had never seen either of us. We conversed on various subjects. The deceased talked most, and in a rather loud voice. The prisoner waited on us very attentively, and was never far from our table. He must have been able to hear a great deal of what we were saying. In the middle of dinner the prisoner dropped a plate which he was bringing to us, and, as he stooped to pick up the pieces, we both noticed that he trembled very much and that his face was very white, and the deceased said, 'That fellow looks ill.' Presently the prisoner brought us coffee. He placed it before me, and stood behind the chair of the deceased. As I was occupied in pouring out the coffee he suddenly drew from his pocket a table-knife, seized Reginald Richards by the hair, forced his head back, and, in a moment, cut his throat from ear to ear. He made no attempt to escape, and refused to utter a word in explanation of his motives."

Questioned as to the conversation which had passed between himself and the deceased during dinner, the witness had replied :

"I cannot speak positively—we talked on various subjects, but I was suffering

from a severe headache and was glad to let the deceased, who was a very talkative man, do most of the talking. Later in the dinner I know he was speaking of politics, English politics, and just as we came into the restaurant, and while we were beginning dinner, he was telling me of some intrigue with a girl somewhere on the Continent—I think he said in France—but whether it was himself or someone else who was the hero of it I cannot recollect. He showed me a gold ring with some French words on it which he wore, and I gathered that the ring was connected with that affair, but I do not know how."

The proprietor of the café, being called for the defence, had given the prisoner an excellent character extending over a period of several years.

That was the whole case. Gustave Mas would say nothing about himself or his motives, and he did not seem to have a friend in the world to say a word either for or against him, except the energetic young counsel who had done his best to make out that the waiter at the Café d'Italia had been suffering from a violent and uncontrollable access of homicidal mania.

And the jury had retired to consider their verdict. Half an hour elapsed, and still the jurymen had not returned. His lordship still dozed behind the Times; solicitors slumbered in the well; the odour of apples waxed stronger; and the whole court forgot, for a space, that it was awaiting the issue of life or death for the grey-haired, weary-eyed alien in the dock.

He is sitting so quiet, this prisoner at the bar, this admitted murderer, that you could easily photograph his face as he sits.

He is a tall, muscular fellow, though his back is bowed as though he had no strength or spirit to hold himself upright, with a square massive head surrounded by thick grey hair, and a grey beard of some weeks' growth; great black eyes, marvellously mild for a murderer, you would say, with a wistful, weary look in them as of a tired, over-worked animal; and big bony hands clasped upon his knees. He wears still his waiter's dress—a threadbare suit of seedy black, with a shirt that once was white, and round his neck, instead of a tie, a silk shoe-lace tied in a bow with its tag of brass dependent.

He looks so quiet, so unmoved, he must indeed be a desperate ruffian.

A flutter in court, an opening and

shutting of doors, a shuffling of feet as the twelve reappear.

The foreman is very pale. He is a worthy, kind-hearted Briton, with a wife and babes at home, and this task of pronouncing on a man's life mislikes him much.

Do they find the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?

They find him guilty.

And is that the verdict of them all?

That is the verdict of them all.

There is nothing about madness, and no recommendation to mercy. Of course not. What extenuating circumstances can there possibly be?

Has the prisoner anything to say why sentence should not be pronounced upon him?

No; the prisoner has nothing to say, except a whisper to himself in French which the court does not hear; but that is no great matter, for it is only two little words, "Dieu merci," and a sigh.

So the judge assumes the black cap, and Gustave Mas is straightway sentenced to be hanged by the neck until he be dead, and may God have mercy upon his soul.

And the court rises, for the day's work is done; and the bench bows to the bar, and the bar bows to the bench, and everyone prepares to go his way—except the condemned. He sits so still, in the same attitude, that the warders must shake him before he will rise to be led away to the condemned cell.

And the public goes home, awed somewhat it may be, but still feeling on the whole that justice has been done. And doubtless the public is right, for has not this foreigner slain an Englishman, and slain him, too, for no apparent reason save that he was sitting before him in the blameless enjoyment of his dinner?

So Gustave Mas was removed to the condemned cell. And there he sat, passive and speechless, during the days that intervened between his trial and execution. He refused the ministrations of the prison chaplain; neither would he avail himself of the spiritual services of a Roman Catholic priest. Not a word on the subject of the murder ever passed his lips, and no friend or relation appeared to take leave of him or soothe his last hours on earth. He was quite alone, this desperate ruffian—quite alone—abandoned by everyone, probably because he was such a ruffian; and everyone, from the governor of Newgate to the warders who watched him, was

unanimously of opinion that he must be a hardened criminal.

But the night before his execution, when the good chaplain came to make a last attempt to rouse him to contrition, he asked for pen and paper, and wrote a letter which he desired might be given to the solicitor who had undertaken (nobody knew why, for no one had paid him) to instruct the energetic young counsel in his defence, but the letter was not to be delivered until after the execution had taken place.

And he lay down to sleep that night quite calmly. And the gaoler who watched him noticed that, as he slept, the hopeless weary look left his face altogether, and often he smiled in his sleep and sometimes murmured broken sentences in French, for he was dreaming, this condemned felon.

And this was his dream.

It was summer far away in fair Touraine, in the vine-land by the Loire; it was summer in Touraine, and it was evening. A broad valley, with gentle uplands on either side clothed with mellowing grapes, and between them meadows rich with hay and clover, and musical with the evening song of birds and the far-off lowing of cattle going down to drink at the river which divided the meadows with a girdle of gold and silver. On one side the upland was crowned by a fair château; on the other frowned the edge of a mighty forest; and nestling warmly in a sheltered hollow beneath rose the roofs of a tiny village. The evening shadows lengthened, the hours chimed mellowly from the grey church-tower, the Angelus had long ago rung out and then died away across the valley; the midges danced in swarms in the warm scented air, and to the west down the valley the sun, sinking over the shoulder of a hill, had blazoned the great shield of heaven with all the tints of his gorgeous heraldry, azure and or, argent and gules. Slowly the great ball of fire sank in the west, and the crimson and golden shafts rose up like the van of a heavenly host—like the spears of the archangel's army ranged against the powers of the dark—and flung the last rays far over the river which lay at rest with its flashing scales of gold and silver, as though the fable of old Hellas were true and this were none other than the dragon guarding the Hesperides of that lovely land.

And brushing knee-deep through the clover by the peaceful riverside—his arm round her waist, his breath stirring the

curls upon her temples—there wandered together a young man and a maid. He was a goodly youth and tall, with black curling hair that flowed thickly round his head, and great black eyes bright with hope and love.

And she was fair to see: delicate of form, with pale, clear, oval face crowned with sunny brown hair, and large grey eyes—not the blue-grey dreamy Teutonic eyes, but the darker grey, laden with light-some fancy, brimming over with suppressed esprit, the laughing eyes of France.

Side by side, heart close to heart, they wandered through that lovely land, and they watched the crimson cloud-islands set in a rose-red sea, and their shores were sands of silver, and their mountains were peaked with gold, and they stretched one behind another far far away into the distance where the rosy sea turned to pale shades of amber and opal and delicate green; and here and there between them a little feathery white cloud would sail like a fairy ship laden with messages of love to the happy dwellers on those fortunate isles. And they seemed to wander on and on until they reached the fair cloud islands, and there they wandered still along the sands of silver and under the peaks of gold—they wandered and were happy. And they never thought that lovers' voices grow silent and lovers' kisses cold, that sand and shingle are weary walking for all their silver seeming, that mountains are toilsome climbing though their heights be crested with gold; for they were innocent and young, and the years stretched before them as bright as that evening sky, and twin spirits hovered round them like the moths in the evening air, and the twin spirits wooed their fancy, and their names were Youth and Love.

And he slept quietly, quite quietly, until they came to rouse him in the morning; and he rose calmly and prepared himself, and so died, calmly and quietly, like the hardened criminal he doubtless was.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXIII. (CONTINUED).

NEITHER Harold nor Mauvain attempts to break the silence which ensues, and presently, Margaret resumes her story:

"We danced and sang for the pleasure of these gentlemen until, wearied and exhausted, my sister sank into my arms. I

watched over her, kneeling by her side, and slept with her, unfaithful guardian that I was. When I awoke in the morning I was alone; my sister was gone, lost to me for ever from that fatal night. In reply to my anxious enquiries—my sister and I had never before been separated for an hour—my master told me a plausible tale of having sent her on in advance of us in the care of a friend; he swore to me that he spoke the truth, and bade me hasten to get ready to follow her. I asked him whether the gentlemen before whom we had performed were in the hotel—for I had some vague idea of appealing to them for protection; and he informed me that they had taken their departure early in the morning. More than one suspicious circumstance indicated that he was deceiving me, but I hoped against hope, and we travelled forward in the direction taken, as he averred, by my sister. In the night we arrived at an inn where I expected to find her; she was not there, and the following morning we resumed our journey; and when, on the evening of that second day, we reached a village, and I learned that all traces of my dear one were lost, the bitter truth forced itself upon me that we had been basely betrayed. It will not help me now to recall the agony of my position. I was in a part of the country of which I was completely ignorant; I was without money, and was utterly, utterly helpless. To have left my master would have been voluntarily to deprive myself of even the remotest chance of recovering my sister. My master was cunning; seeing that I suspected him he offered me my liberty, although, as I was legally bound to him, he could have compelled me to work for him until I was twenty-one years of age. With as much calmness and wisdom as I could bring to my aid I debated how I should act, and I could come to no other conclusion than that my only hope lay in remaining with my master, and keeping a watch over his movements. Months passed, and my hope died away. How wretched was my life, and with what self-torturings was I afflicted! So time passed until I made the acquaintance of Matthew Sylvester and his son. By what means the good man who afterwards became my father obtained my release from the power of a human monster he has never divulged, but it could have been only by purchase, for my master would have sold his soul for money. I travelled with them, sharing their life, and after a time Matthew broke

the news to me of my darling sister's death; he had learned it from my master, and had mercifully withheld it from me. So, with that earthly tie severed, as I believed, for ever, I married Matthew Sylvester's son, and we came to the Silver Isle."

"And here ends your story," says Harold, who has followed Margaret's narrative with the closest attention.

"No; there is more to tell, which will enable you to understand the reason of my visit, if indeed you are still in ignorance of it. When my second child, Gabrielle, was born, a statue of Evangeline, a name loved and honoured in the isle, was set up in the market-place. It was the work of a young sculptor in the old world, and there was great talk of its beauty. I gazed upon it in wonder and terror, for the face I saw was the face of my sister. The sculptor who modelled those marble features must have known Clarice."

This is the first time Margaret has mentioned the name of her sister, and Harold says:

"Do you hear, Mauvain? Clarice?"

"I hear, Harold," replies Mauvain calmly; "the woman had best finish her story."

"I allowed myself to be argued out of my fancy, but it was never entirely dispelled, and events have lately occurred which have fixed it in my mind as a certain conviction. Not only was I betrayed by being torn from her I loved so dearly, but I was deceived in the story of her death. At the time my master informed Matthew Sylvester that my sister was dead, she lived. Why was the wicked lie spoken? To what base end—for what base purpose?"

"Why do you question me?" asks Harold.

"Because you perhaps are the only person within this isle who can relieve my tortured heart. You are the sculptor of the image of Clarice."

"A surmise," says Harold.

"A certainty," retorts Margaret. "There is no name, it is true, to the image, but the letter H is cut in the marble. Your name is Harold."

"Consistently argued. What then?"

"What then?" echoes Margaret, advancing towards him with clasped hands and heaving bosom. "Is it not natural that I should come to you to ascertain the fate of my beloved sister? If you are the sculptor—and you have not

denied it, being a gentleman, who, to screen himself, would scorn to hide behind a lie—you knew Clarice after I believed her to be dead? You are one of the two before whom we were dragged in the night at the will of our cruel master. When me first met here upon this isle you recognised me, and you saw that I recognised you. Answer me, if you have the feelings of a man? What has become of my sister Clarice?"

"Direct me, Mauvain," says Harold. "How am I to reply?"

Mauvain, in a careless tone, gives direction. "In any way you please, in what concerns yourself. If this matter is yours, satisfy the woman according to your whim. Invent, imagine, speak the truth or lie—in short, say anything that occurs to your ingenious mind; but in so far as I am concerned, I forbid you to violate the confidence of friendship. My own affairs I can settle without interference; and believe me, Harold, I will allow none."

Rising to leave the room, Mauvain is suddenly confronted by Margaret, who, now that he is standing with the light upon his face, recognises him.

"Great Heaven!" she exclaims; "you are the gentleman who was playing cards with my master on that fatal night!" She looks from one to the other in dumb amazement; neither Harold nor Mauvain assists her by sign or word. "Will you not speak?" she cries. "Can you stand calmly by, having the power to say what I would give my best blood to hear, and speak no word? Are you men or monsters?"

Mauvain frowns. "You are bold, mistress."

"You would find me bolder," exclaims Margaret, with flaming eyes, "if I had reason to suppose that you, or you"—turning defiantly to Harold—"had wronged my sister, an innocent child, with no knowledge or suspicion of the world's cruelty and deceit!"

Mauvain taps his snuffbox lightly, and with a smile asks: "What would you do?"

"What would I do? I would kill you where you stand! Ah, me! What am I saying? I forget that I am a woman."

"Your forgetfulness extends farther than that, mistress. But in this matter, truly, you would need a champion."

"I should find one," she cries, as hot as he is cool; "there is not a man on the Silver Isle who would not champion my

cause, for it is the cause of right and virtue. And remember, I have men nearer to me who would hold their lives lightly, if I called upon them to avenge a cruel wrong inflicted upon a pure and helpless girl. For she was betrayed—I know it now—I feel it here!" pressing her hand to her heart. "Oh, God! throw light upon this mystery, and bring the guilty to justice!"

"Listen to me," says Mauvain, in his smooth polished voice, which nothing seems able to disturb, "and know your station. Had you appealed to me in a manner which showed that you were aware of the difference in our positions, I might have satisfied you——"

"Having the power?" demands Margaret, every pulse in her body throbbing with passion.

"Having the power," replies Mauvain. "I might, I say, have satisfied you, and told you something of your sister. That it might not have pleased you springs from the fact that you and she are of a different order from those you are now addressing."

"I thank Heaven for it, with all my soul!" cries Margaret, with a growing horror of this polished gentleman.

"Had you chosen," continues Mauvain, "to speak in tones of humbleness, you might have gone from this house—and I bid you begone quickly, for it is mine—some-what wiser than you entered it. During our pleasant interview, mistress, you have asked many questions. Favour me by answering one—the only one—I shall put to you. Lives there upon this isle any person to whom you are indebted for the new light which has so suddenly dawned upon you?"

"Yes," she replies; "Ranf the hunch-back."

"I suspected as much. Ask him to be your champion."

"I will do so."

"Good. Now, go," pointing to the door, "unless you wish to be turned from my gates."

"I will go," says Margaret, walking to the door; "but a voice within me tells me we shall meet again."

"I shall look forward to the interview," says Mauvain, with a graceful bow, "with infinite pleasure."

Never, in her after life, is Margaret able to remember how she reached the gates, and passed beyond them. But she has done so, with no consciousness of time or space, and she sees nothing, hears nothing,

until Harold, who has followed her, lays his hand upon her arm.

"Pardon me," he says, "for my share of the proceedings which have so much distressed you; but I was free neither to act nor speak as my heart dictated. I have something to say to you which could not be spoken within the house you have just left."

His manner is so earnest, and his demeanour so different from that in which he has hitherto presented himself to her, that she cannot but listen to him. He continues:

"In the story you told us of the career of your sister and yourself you said that your lives were pure and stainless. To cast a doubt upon that statement would be, I am certain—on my truth and honour, not as a gentleman, but as a man, I aver it—as false as it would be shameful. I believe it implicitly, unhesitatingly, but for a reason of my own, in which you and your pitiful story play their part, I want to hear it once more from your own lips."

"Shall I utter it again to one who has proved himself my enemy?" she asks.

"I am not your enemy," he declares, with moist eyes and quivering lips; "I swear that I am and would be your friend!"

"It is monstrous," she cries, "that one who assisted to betray my unhappy sister should thus address me!"

"Ah, how you wrong me! and with what apparent cause!—for truth and justice and evidence are on your side, and I stand alone without a witness. You must trust me—you must! Careless, reckless, regardless as I may seem of all that is best and highest and noblest in this life and the next—for I believe in it, Margaret Sylvester—there is in me a worthier spirit than I have ever shown to the world, than I have ever admitted even to myself in my hours of self-communion. In saying this I do not desire to avoid responsibility. As I have sown, so shall I reap—and I have sown deliberately, tares, weeds, and plants which have been as a poison to my soul. Let it pass; what is done, is done, and my life shall answer for it—my life which I account of less value than the frailest blade of grass. But in this matter which you have revealed to-day there is something which is infinitely dearer to me than life, if life were as precious to me as it is to most. I knew your sister; I honoured, pitied, and respected her. May hope and mercy be blotted out for me through all

eternity if by word or deed I ever did her wrong! Do you believe me?"

"I do," says Margaret, carried away by his fervour and earnestness; "you compel me to believe you."

"By-and-by you may believe without compelling, and, of your own honest, unbiassed will, may think of me with tenderness and pity. Voices whisper to me, as they have done to you. Fate and destiny are working to their allotted end, and the hand of man cannot arrest them. Now let me hear once more from your lips that the lives of your sister and your own, at the time I met you in the old land, were pure and stainless."

"Have you a sister?"

"No."

"A mother?"

"No; she died when I was a child. She is to me but a memory."

"A pure memory?"

"She has been to me the emblem of purity—its spirit, its incarnation. In my earlier days I used to look up to heaven, believing that she shone upon me in the light of a star. Not the brightest that I saw—the sweetest and most peaceful, speaking to me, with silent voice, of sacred hopes and aims which have long since died out of my life. You have revived that holy memory. To-night I shall see my mother's star in the heavens; and upon my knees, for the first time for God knows how many years, I shall breathe a prayer."

"Pure as the memory of your sainted mother," says Margaret, solemnly, "was my beloved sister Clarice when you first saw her in the old land." Involuntarily she holds out her hand to him, and he takes it and raises it to his lips. She is about imploringly to ask him now to divulge what he knows concerning Clarice, when, divining her intention, he begs her to say no more at present.

"Soon you shall know all," he says; "I go to take the seal from my lips."

And with these strange words he leaves her, and returns to Mauvain's house.

CHAPTER XXIV. HAROLD DEMANDS AN EXPLANATION OF MAUVAIN.

ON his way, Harold paused two or three times to wipe his lips, which were dry, and his forehead, which was moist, and to contemplate the evidences of Mauvain's exquisite taste and culture. He paused, also, at the group which he had cut in marble of Ranf and Evangeline.

"It is a disgrace to an artist," he mused, "but it is not my property, and must stand as a record of my shame. Thus does an artist sell his soul, piecemeal, for wine and fine linen. But there is a better record in the market-place, which may compensate for this libel. I feel almost weak-minded enough to go and set my name upon it; not this hour, though; I have other work to do."

He walked straight to the room in which he had left Mauvain. His friend was not there; he went then to a smaller room which Mauvain had made into a study. He tried the door; it was locked. He knocked, and Mauvain answered.

"Who is there?"

"It is I—Harold."

"I am resting," said Mauvain, from within; "and cannot be disturbed."

"I must see you at once."

"Must?" echoed Mauvain haughtily.

"It is imperative."

The door was unlocked, and Harold entered. The room was in disorder, and bore no signs of the rest which Mauvain said he was taking; every secret drawer in a large and handsome desk was open, and the table and desk were strewn with papers.

"You have been busy, I see," said Harold.

"I told you," rejoined Mauvain, with a lack of cordiality, "that I was at rest. I did not wish to be disturbed."

"And I told you it was imperative I should see you. I regret the necessity, but it is not the less a necessity."

In this brief dialogue the ordinary tone observed by these friends in their conversations had been lost sight of; this appeared to strike them simultaneously, and they at once relapsed into their usual manner. Mauvain pointed to a chair, covered with papers, and Harold, without apology, scattered the papers to the floor, and took the seat.

"You must have something of the greatest interest to communicate," said Mauvain, with a purposed drawl, "that you intrude upon me against my wish."

"You are partly right, Mauvain; I have something of the greatest interest, not exactly to communicate, but to speak to you upon."

"I observed that you followed that woman out of the house."

"Yes, I followed her."

"And conversed with her?"

"Yes."

"Do you wish to relate to me what passed between you?"

"No, I have no such wish; but in what we have now to say, you may perhaps gather something of its import."

"You appear to be in a strange humour, Harold."

"Mauvain, I have seen a ghost."

"Of a woman?"

"Of a star."

"Come, this promises well."

"I almost hope it will not end as well, for if it does my hopes may disappear and my faith may be once more lost, never again to be restored."

"Interesting as ever, Harold; I scarcely regret you disturbed me."

"Mauvain, I must speak to you seriously."

"I hate seriousness, but if you insist upon it, I will not thwart you."

"Let us, then, travel back in memory to the eventful night so vividly recalled awhile since by Margaret Sylvester."

"I have had occasion, Harold, to warn you lately more than once; I trust you are not going to compel me to do so again."

"It is immaterial, Mauvain; no warnings, exhortations, threats, or appeals, can divert me from the goal upon which my mind is set. Spare, then, your breath, and let us converse freely, and, if we can, honestly."

"Have you come to pick a quarrel?"

"Heaven forbid; but if that contingency were to occur, we at least should know how to settle it. We stand on equal ground; we are both gentlemen. Mauvain, I have been your friend; your companion in many a daring and many a foolish adventure, I have never yet had occasion to question your courage or your honour. Not always in accord with you, stung sometimes by the airs of superiority you have assumed—and in which to some extent you were fairly justified—I have followed your lead in idle mood, and have upheld you before your face and behind your back, as was the duty of a friend who, although he could not justly defend, on the strict score of morality, all that was done, still is content to share the pleasure and the consequences of acts in which he is a participant."

"It suited you, Harold."

"I do not deny it; nor do I assume a virtue which I am conscious I have never possessed. But I have always understood—and on my honour I speak the truth—that those who were led by us to share our pleasures, or who of their own

accord joined in them, were like ourselves votaries of pleasure. I use the word in its ordinary acceptation. That some required to be wooed, coaxed, intrigued for—that some held off and by so doing added to the pursuit a keener enjoyment—that some falsely professed, and needed argument, persuasion, protestation, before they joined the hunt—led always to the same result. Judged by a moral standard—I ask a thousand pardons for dragging in such a figure of speech—we and they were invariably on an equality; of the earth earthy—with but one object in view—enjoyment of life.”

“You have missed your vocation, Harold; you should have been a new-school preacher.”

“I have missed much—of which I shall never now obtain possession. What I have said has been not in justification but in explanation of myself. Mauvain, in all that I have joined, in all that I have participated, I have never once had reason to suppose that innocence was betrayed.”

“Poor innocence! and simple, unsophisticated Harold! I see the dimmest glimmer of a light.”

“It will become clearer with every word that follows. I come, then, once more, to the night so vividly recalled by Margaret Sylvester. I need not detail again the events of that night.”

“For love’s sake, no! It is as clear to me as it seems to be to you; although why it should have so much affected you passes my comprehension. But I shall be soon enlightened.”

“I had arrived, without premeditation, in a town in which you were making a brief stay; I could stop but a few hours. There was but one hotel for gentlemen in the town, and there I put up. I was young at the time——”

“Very nearly as young, my dear Harold, as you are at the present time.”

“I would it were so. We had met before, and had formed an agreeable acquaintanceship, almost, if not quite, a friendship. You professed to be delighted to see me. ‘Harold,’ said you, ‘I can give you a night of pleasure and delight. There is here a travelling manager, with two of the loveliest creatures you have ever beheld. I have engaged them to sing and dance in a theatre attached to this hotel, and only my private friends are to be admitted to witness the performance. The manager is a scoundrel, and the girls—well, what such girls usually are. Dine with me, and be my guest for the night.’ I gladly consented—I was proud of your friendship, Mauvain, for your name stood high, as it has always stood, and to be accepted by you was a mark of distinction. Believe me it was not on those worldly grounds that you won me; I had no sordid object in view; but it was because I fancied I discerned in you a nature akin to my own.” Harold’s voice faltered as he recalled these youthful dreams, and his head drooped, and Mauvain, as he regarded the man who was young enough to be his son, was stirred by an unusual tenderness. He placed his hand upon Harold’s hand, and for a moment Harold allowed it to rest there. Then he drew it softly away, and raising his head, gazed at Mauvain sadly, with tears in his eyes. Mauvain, scarcely knowing what he did, held out his arms, as though he would embrace his friend; but Harold held back, and Mauvain’s arms fell to his side. In a constrained voice he said, “Your memory is perfect; proceed.”

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIXEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER V. "THOU LOVEST ME, THAT WOT I WEL CERTAIN."

MANY a time since her home-coming had Daphne been on the point of telling her sister all about that more or less anonymous traveller, whom she called the man in the wood; but her picnicking adventures, looked at retrospectively from the strictly correct atmosphere of home, seemed much more terrible than they had appeared to her at Asnières; where a vague hankering after forbidden pleasures was an element in the girlish mind, and where there was a current idea that the most appalling impropriety was allowable, provided the whole business were meant as a joke. But Daphne, seated at Madoline's feet, began to feel doubtful if there were any excuse for such joking; and, after that one skirmishing approach to the subject, she said no more about the gentleman who had called himself Nero. It was hateful to her to have a secret, were it the veriest trifle, from her sister; but the idea of Madoline's disapproval was still more repugnant to her; and she was very certain that Madoline would disapprove of the whole transaction in which Mr. Nero had been concerned.

"I could never tell how thoroughly at home I felt with him," mused Daphne; "how easy and natural our acquaintance seemed—just as if we had been destined from the very beginning of time to meet at that hour and at that spot. And to part so soon!" added Daphne with a sigh. "It seemed hardly worth while to meet."

Yes; it was a mystery upon which

Daphne brooded very often in the fair spring weather, as she wandered by her beloved river. Strange that two lives should meet and touch for a moment, like circles on yonder placid water—meet, and touch, and part, and never meet again!

"The rings on the river break when they touch," thought Daphne. "They are fatal to each other. Our meeting had no significance: two summer days and it was all over and ended. I wonder whether Nero has ever thought of Poppæa after he left Fontainebleau? Poppæa! What a silly name; and what a simpleton he must have thought me for assuming it."

Of all things at South Hill, where there was so much that was beautiful, Daphne loved the river. It had been her delight when she was a tiny child, hardly able to syllable the words that were meant to express admiration. She had wanted to walk into the water—had struggled in her nurse's arms to get at it, and make herself a part of the thing that seemed so beautiful. Then when she was just a little older and a little wiser, it had been her delight to sit on the very edge of the stream, to sit hidden in the rushes spelling out a fairy tale. In those early days she would have been happy if the world had begun and ended in those low-lying meadows where daffodils, and orchuses, and blue-bells grew in such rich abundance that she could gather and waste them all day long, yet make no perceptible difference in their number; where the lazy cattle stood half the day-breast high in the weedy water, dreaming with wide-open eyes; where the shadow of a bird flitting across the stream was the only thing that gave token of life's restlessness. Later there came a happy midsummer holiday when her father was

away at Ems, nursing his last fancied disorder, and she and Madoline were alone together at South Hill under the protection of the maiden aunt, who never interfered with anybody's pleasure so long as she could enjoy her own way of life; and in a willow-shaded creek Daphne found a disused forgotten punt which had lain stagnant in the mud for the last seven years, and with the aid of a youth who worked in the gardens she had so patched and caulked and painted this derelict as to make it tolerably water-tight, and in this frail and clumsy craft she had punted herself up and down a shallow tributary of the deep swift Avon, as far afield as she could go without making Madoline absolutely miserable.

And now being "finished," and a young woman, Daphne asked herself where she was to get a boat. She had plenty of pocket-money. There was an old boat-house under one of the willows where she could keep her skiff. She had learnt to swim at Asnières, so there could be no danger. So she took counsel with the garden youth, who had grown into a man by this time, and asked him whether he could buy her a boat, and where.

"That's accordin' to the kind o' boat as you might fancy, miss," answered her friend. "There's a many kind o' boats, you see."

"Oh, I hardly know; but I should like something light and pretty, a long narrow boat, don't you know?" and Daphne went on to describe an outrigger.

"Lord, miss, it would be fearful dangerous. You'd be getting he among the weeds, and upsettin' un. You'd better have a dingey. That's safe and comfortable like."

"A dingey's a thing like a washing-tub, isn't it?"

"Rayther that shape, miss."

"I wouldn't sit in such a thing for the world. No, Bink, if I can't have a long narrow boat with a sharp nose, I'll have a punt. I think I should really like a punt. I was so fond of that one. I feel quite sorry that the rats eat it. Yes; you must buy me a punt. There'll be plenty of room in it for my drawing-board, and my books, and my crewel-work; for I mean to live on the river when the summer comes. How soon can you buy me my punt?"

"I think as how you'd better have a dingey, miss," said Bink. "It was all very well pushing about a punt in the creeks when you was a child, but a punt don't do in deep water. You can have a nice shaped dingey, not too much of a tub, you know, and a pair o' sculls, and I'll

teach you to row. I can order it any arternoon that I can get an 'oliday, miss. There's a good boat-builder at Stratford. I'll order he to build it."

"How lovely," cried Daphne, clapping her hands. "A boat built on purpose for me! It must have no end of cushions, for my sister will come with me very often, of course. And it must be painted in the early English style. I'll have a dark red dado."

"A what, miss?"

"A dado, Bink. The lower half of the inside must be painted dark red, and the upper half a lovely cream colour; and the outside must be a dark greenish-brown. You understand, don't you?"

"Not over well, miss. You'd better write it down for the boat-builder."

"I'll do better than that, Bink—I'll make a sketch of the boat and paint it the colours I want. And it—she—must have a name, I suppose."

"Boats has names mostly, miss."

"My boat shall not be nameless. I'll call her——" A pause, then a sudden dimpling smile and a bright blush, loveliness thrown away on Bink, who stood at ease leaning on his hoe and staring at the river. "I'll call her—Nero."

"An 'ero, miss. What 'ero? The old Dook o' Wellington? He were an 'ero, warn't he. Or Nelson? That's more of a name for a boat."

"Nero, Bink, Nero. I'll write it down for the boat-builder."

"You'd better, please, miss. I never was good at remembering names."

When Daphne had given Bink the sketch, with full authority to commission her boat, she had an after-thought about her father. The boat-house was his property; even the river in some measure belonged to him; he had at least riparian rights. So after dinner that evening, when Madoline and she were sitting opposite each other in silence at the pretty table, bright with velvety gloxinias and maiden-hair ferns, while Sir Vernon leant back in his chair, sipping his claret, and grumbling vaguely about things in general, the indolence of his servants, the unfitness of his horses, the impending ruin of the land in which he lived, and the crass ignorance of the pig-headed body of men who were pretending to govern it, Daphne, in a pause of the paternal monologue, lifted up her voice.

"Papa, may I have a dingey, please? I can buy it with my own money."

"A dingey!" exclaimed Sir Vernon. "What in Heaven's name is a dingey?"

He had an idea that it must be some article of female attire or of fancy-work, since his frivolous young daughter desired to possess it.

"A dingey—is—a kind of boat, papa."

"Oh, a dingey!" exclaimed Sir Vernon, as if she had said something else in the first instance. "What can you want with a dingey?"

"I am so dearly fond of the river, papa; and a dingey is such a safe boat, Bink says."

"Who is Bink?"

"One of the under gardeners."

"A curious authority to quote. So you want a dingey, and to row yourself about the river like a boy."

"There is no one to notice me, papa."

"The place is secluded enough, so long as you don't go beyond our own meadows. I desired Madame Tolmache to have you taught swimming. Can you swim?"

"Yes, papa. I believe I am a rather good swimmer."

"Well, you can have your boat—it is a horribly masculine taste—always provided you do not go beyond our own fields. I cannot have you boating over half the county."

"I shall be quite happy to keep to our own fields, papa," Daphne answered meekly.

She enlisted the devoted Bink in her service next morning; he patched up the old boat-house, and whitewashed the inside walls; much to the displeasure of Mr. MacCloskie, the head gardener, a gentleman in broadcloth and a top hat, who seemed to do little more than walk about the grounds, smoke his pipe in the hot-houses, plan expensive improvements, and order costly novelties from the most famous nurseries at home and abroad. Bink ought to have been wheeling manure from the stable during that very afternoon which he had devoted to the repair of the boat-house; and Mr. MacCloskie declared that the future well-being of his melon-bed was imperilled by the young man's misconduct.

"I shall complain to Sir Vernon," said MacCloskie.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. MacCloskie, but Miss Daphne told me to do it."

"Miss Daphne, indeed! I can't have my gardeners interfered with by Miss Daphne," exclaimed MacCloskie; as much as to say that his master's second daughter was a person of very small account.

He gave Daphne a lecture that evening, in very broad Scotch, when he met her in the rose-garden.

"You'll be meddling with my roses

next, miss, I suppose," he said severely. "You young ladies from boarding-school have no respect for anything."

"Your roses!" cried Daphne, with a contemptuous glance at the closely-pruned twigs of the standards, which at this early period looked as if they would never flower again. "When I see any I shall know how to appreciate them. Roses, indeed! I wonder you like to mention them. Everything flowers a month earlier in France than you can make it do here. I had a Gloire de Dijon nodding in at my window at Asnières this time last year;" and she marched off, leaving MacCloskie with a dim idea that in any skirmish with this young lady he was likely to be worsted.

How ardently she had longed for home a few weeks ago, when she was counting the days that must pass before the appointed date of her return, under the wing of Madame Tolmache, who crossed the Channel reluctantly once or twice a year to convey pupils, and was prostrate in the cabin throughout the brief sea-passage, leaving the pupils to take care of themselves, and so horribly ill on landing that the pupils had to take care of her. So long as South Hill was in the future Daphne had believed that perfect happiness awaited her there—gladness without a flaw—but now that she was at home, established, a recognised member of the family for all her life to come, she began to discover that even at South Hill life was not perfect happiness. She was devotedly fond of Madoline, and Madoline was full of affection—careful, anxious, almost maternal love—for her. There was no flaw in her gladness here. But every hour she spent in her father's company made her more certain of the one painful fact that he did not care for her. There was even in her mind the terrible suspicion that he actually disliked her; that he would have been glad to have her out of his way—married, dead and buried—anything so that she might be removed from his path.

She was very young, and her spirits had all the buoyancy of youth that has never been acquainted with sordid cares. So there was plenty of gladness in her life. It was only now and then that the thought of her father's indifference, or possible dislike, drifted like a passing cloud across her mind, and took the charm out of everything.

"What a lovely place it is," she said to Madoline one evening, after dinner, when they were strolling about the lawn, where three of the finest deodaras in the county

rose like green towers against the warm western sky; "I am fonder of it every day, yet I can't help feeling that I'm an interloper."

"Daphne! You—the daughter of the house!"

"A daughter; not the daughter," answered Daphne. "Sometimes I fancy that I am a daughter too many. You should have heard how MacCloskie talked to me yesterday because I had taken Bink from his work for an hour or two. If I had been a poor little underpaid nursery-governess he couldn't have scolded me more severely. And I think servants have a knack of finding out their master's feelings. If I had been a favourite with my father, MacCloskie would never have talked like that. A favourite! What nonsense. It is so obvious that I bore him awfully."

"Daphne, if you are going to nurse this kind of fancy you will never be happy," Madoline said earnestly, winding her arm round her sister, as they sauntered slowly down the sloping lawn, side by side. "You must make every allowance for papa; he is not a demonstrative man. His manner may seem cold, perhaps——"

"Cold!" cried Daphne. "It is ice. I feel I have entered the frigid zone directly I go into his presence. But he is not cold to you; he has love enough, and to spare, for you."

"We have been so much together. I have learned to be useful to him."

"Yes; you have spent your life with him, while I have been an outcast and an alien."

"Daphne, you have no right to speak like that. Papa is a man of peculiar temper. It pleased him to have only one daughter at home till both were grown up. You were more lively than I—younger by seven years—and he fancied you would be noisy. He is a nervous man, wanting an atmosphere of complete repose. And now you are grown up, and have come home for good—and I really cannot see any reason why you should complain."

"No; there is nothing to complain about," cried Daphne bitterly, "only that I have been cheated out of a father's love. Not by you, Lina, dearest; no, not by you," she exclaimed, when her sister would have spoken; "I am not base enough to be jealous of you—you who have been my good angel always. No, dear; but he has cheated me. My father has cheated me in not giving me a chance of getting at his heart when I was a child. What is the good of my trying now? I come home

to him as a stranger. How can he be expected to care for me?"

"If he does not love you now, my pet—and mind, I don't admit that it is so—he will soon learn to be fond of you. He can't help admiring my sweet young sister," said Madoline, with tearful eyes.

"I will never plague you about him any more, dear," protested Daphne, with a penitent air. "I will try to be satisfied with your affection—you do love me, don't you?"

"With all my strength."

"And to do my duty in that state of life, &c., &c., &c."

"Talking of duty, Daphne, I have been wanting to make a suggestion for the last week or two," said Madoline gently. "Don't you think it would be better for you if you were to employ yourself a little more?"

"Employ myself!" cried Daphne. "Why I have been tremendously busy for the last three days—about the dingey."

"Dearest, you are laughing at me. I mean that at seventeen——"

"And a half," interjected Daphne with dignity.

"At seventeen your education can hardly be completed."

"I know ridiculously little, though I have been outrageously crammed. I'm afraid all the sciences and languages and literature have got mixed up in my brain somehow," said Daphne, "but I am awfully fond of poetry. I know a good deal of Tennyson by heart. I could repeat every line of *The Lotos Eaters* if you asked me," said Daphne, blushing unaccountably.

"I think you ought to read, dear," pursued Madoline gravely.

"Why, so I do. Didn't I read three volumes of *Sair for Somebody*, in a single day, in order that the book might go back to Mudie's?"

"That rubbishing story! Daphne, dear, you know I am talking of serious reading."

"Than you had better find somebody else to talk to," said Daphne. "I never could pin my mind to a dull book; my thoughts go dancing off like butterflies, skimming away like swallows. I could no more plod through a history, or a volume of *Voyages in Timbuctoo*, or *Sir Somebody's Memoirs at the Court of Queen Joan of Naples*, or a *Waiting Woman's Recollections of Peter the Great*, than I could fly. There are a few characters in history I like to read about—in short instalments. Napoleon the Great, for instance. There is a hero for you—bloodthirsty, but nice. Mary Stuart, Julius Cæsar, Sir

Walter Raleigh, Columbus, Shakespeare. These shine out like stars. But the dull, dead level of history—the going out of the Whigs and the coming in of the Tories, the everlasting battles in the Netherlands or the Punjaub—I envy you your faculty of taking interest in such dry-as-dust stuff, but I cannot imitate you.”

“I like to be able to talk to papa—and to Gerald, by-and-by,” said Madoline shyly.

“Does papa talk of the Punjaub?”

“Not often, dear; but in order to understand the events of one’s own day, it is necessary to know the history of the past. Papa likes to discuss public affairs, and I generally read the Times to him every morning, as you know.”

“Yes,” answered Daphne; “I know you are his slave.”

“Daphne, it is my delight to be useful to him.”

“Yes; that is the sort of woman you are, always sacrificing your own happiness for other people. But I love you for it, dearest,” exclaimed Daphne, with one of her sudden gushes of affection. “Only don’t ask me to improve myself, darling, now that I am tasting perfect liberty for the first time in my life. Think how I have been ground and polished and governessed and preached at, and back-boarded,” drawing up her slim figure straight as an arrow, “and dumb-belled, and fifth-positioned, for so many weary years of my life, and let me have my fling of idleness at home. I began to wonder if I really had a home, papa kept me away from it so long. Let me be idle and happy, Lina, for a little while; I shall mend by-and-by.”

“My pet, do you suppose I don’t wish you to be happy. But I don’t want your education to come to a full stop, because you have left school.”

“Let me learn to be like you, if I can. There could be no higher education than that.”

“Flatterer!”

“No, Lina, no one can flatter perfection.”

Madoline stopped her with a kiss, blushing at her praise. And then they turned and walked slowly back to the house, across the dewy lawn, where the shadows of the deodaras had deepened and lengthened with the rising of the moon. Daphne paused on the terrace to look back at the low-lying river gleaming between its willowy banks—so beautiful and ghostly a thing in the moonlight that it almost seemed as if it belonged to another world.

“How lovely it is out of doors,” sighed

Daphne. “Doesn’t it seem foolishness to shut oneself up in a house. Stay a little longer, Lina.”

“Papa would not like to be deserted, dear. And Aunt Rhoda talked about coming in this evening.”

“Then I am in for a lecture,” said Daphne. “Aunt Rhoda told me to go and see her, and I haven’t been.”

There was a brilliant light in the billiard-room, and the two girls went in through the conservatory and down the stone steps to the room where they were most likely to find their father at this time of the evening. Sir Vernon Lawford was not an enthusiastic billiard-player; indeed, he was not enthusiastic about anything, except his own merits, of which he had a very exalted opinion. He played a game of billiards every evening, because it kept him awake and kept him in gentle movement, which state of being he considered good for his health. He played gravely, as if he were doing his duty to society, and played well; and, though he liked to have his elder daughter in the room while he played, and could bring himself to tolerate the presence of other people, he resented anything distracting in the way of conversation.

Seen in the bright white light of the carcel lamps, Sir Vernon Lawford, at fifty-three years of age, was still a handsome man—a tall, well set-up man, with a hard, clearly chiselled face, eyes of lightish grey, cold and severe in expression, grey hair and whiskers, hands of feminine delicacy in shape and colour, and something rigid and soldier-like in his bearing, as of a man who had been severely drilled himself, and would be a martinet in his rule over others.

He was bending over the table with frowning brow, meditating a difficult stroke, as the two girls came softly in through the wide doorway—two tall slim figures in white gowns, with a background of flowers and palms showing dimly behind them, and beyond the foliage and flowers, the glimmer of a marble balustrade.

A fashionably-dressed lady of uncertain age, the solitary spectator of the game, sat fanning herself in silence by the wide marble fire-place. Sir Vernon’s antagonist came quietly forward to greet Madoline and her sister.

“I am so glad you have come in,” he said confidently. “I am getting ignominiously licked. I had a good mind to throw up the sponge and bolt out into the garden after you just now; only I thought if I didn’t take my licking decently, Sir Vernon

would never play with me again. Isn't it too delicious out there among the deodaras?"

"Heavenly," exclaimed Daphne; "and the river looks like the 'chemin du Paradis.' I wonder you can stay in this glaring room."

Sir Vernon had made up his mind by this time, and with a slow and easy stroke, made a cannon and sent his adversary's ball into a pocket.

"Just like my luck," said the adversary, while Sir Vernon again deliberated.

He was a man of about seven-and-twenty, tall, broad shouldered, good-looking, with something of a gladiatorial air in his billiard-room undress. He was fair, with a healthy Saxon colour, and Saxon blue eyes; features not chiselled, but somewhat heavily moulded, yet straight and regular withal; hair, a lightish brown, cropped closely to a well-shaped head; forehead, fairly furnished with intellectual organs, but not the brow of poet or philosopher, wit or savant: a good average English forehead, a good average English face, beaming with good-nature, as he stands by Madoline's side, chalking his cue as industriously as if chalk could win the game.

This was Edgar Turchill, of Hawksyard Grange, Sir Vernon Lawford's most influential and pleasantest neighbour, a country squire of old family and fair fortune, owner of one of the most interesting places in the county, a real Warwickshire manor-house, and the only son of his widowed mother.

The lady by the fire-place now began to think she had been neglected long enough, and beckoned Daphne with her fan. She beckoned the girl with an authoritative air which distinctly indicated relationship.

"Come here and sit by me, child," she whispered, tapping the fender-stool with the point of her embroidered shoe, whereupon Daphne meekly crouched at the lady's feet, prepared for the worst. "Why have you never been to the Rectory?"

Daphne twisted her fingers in and out of her slender watch-chain with an embarrassed air.

"Indeed, I hardly know why, Aunt Rhoda," she faltered; "perhaps it was because I was enjoying myself so much. Everything at home was so new to me, you see—the gardens, the river, the meadows."

"You were enjoying yourself so much that you had no inclination to see your aunt and uncle?"

"Uncle?" echoed Daphne. "Oh, you mean the rector?"

"Of course. Is he not your uncle?"

"Is he, aunt? I know he's your husband;

but as you only married him a year ago, and he hadn't begun to be my uncle when I was last at home, it never occurred to me——"

"That by my marriage with him he had become your uncle. That looks like ignorance, Daphne, or want of proper feeling," said the rector's wife with an offended air.

"It was ignorance, Aunt Rhoda. At Madame Tolmache's they taught us so much geography and geology and astronomy, don't you know, that they were obliged to keep us in the dark about uncles and aunts. And am I really to call the rector uncle? It seems quite awful."

"Why awful?"

"Because I have looked up to him all my life as a being in a black silk gown who preached long sermons and would do something awful to me if I laughed in church. I looked upon him as the very embodiment of the Church, don't you know, and should hardly have believed that he wanted breakfast and dinner, and wore out his clothes and boots like other men. When he came to call I used to run away and hide myself. I had an idea that he would scold me if I came in his way—take me to task for not being a Christian, or ask me to repeat last Sunday's Gospel. And to think that he should be my uncle. How curiously things come round in this life!"

"I hope you will not cease to respect him, and that you will learn to love him," said Aunt Rhoda severely.

"Learn to love him! Do you think he would like it?" asked Daphne doubtfully.

"He would like you to behave to him as a niece ought, Daphne. Marmaduke considers my relations his own."

"I'm sure it is very good of him," said Daphne, "but I should think it must come a little difficult after having known us so long in quite another capacity."

The rector's wife gave her niece a look of half interrogation, half disapproval. She did not know how much malice might lurk under the girl's seeming innocence. She and Daphne had never got on very well together in the old days, when Miss Lawford was the mistress of South Hill, and the arbiter of her nieces' lives.

A year ago, and Rhoda Lawford at three-and-forty was still Rhoda Lawford, and any idea of matrimonial promotion which she had once cherished might fairly be supposed to have expired in the cold shade of a neighbourhood where there were very few marriageable men. But Rhoda had begun life as a girl with considerable pretensions. She had never

asserted herself or been put forward by her friends as a beauty. The material for that kind of reputation was wanting. But she had been admired and praised for her style, her manner, her complexion, her hair, her hands, her feet, her waist, her shoulders. She was a young lady with good points, and had been admired for her points. People had talked of her as the elegant Miss Lawford; and as, happily, elegance is a quality which time need not impair, Rhoda had gone on being elegant for five-and-twenty years. The waist and shoulders, the hands and feet, had never been out of training for a quarter of a century. More ephemeral charms had bloomed and faded, and many a fair friend of Rhoda's who had triumphed in the insolence of conscious beauty was now a *passée* matron, of whom her acquaintance said pityingly, "You have no idea how pretty that woman was fifteen years ago;" but the elegant Miss Lawford's attractions were unimpaired, and the elegant Miss Lawford had not yet surrendered the hope of winning a prize in the matrimonial lottery.

The living of Baddesley-with-Arden was one of those fat sinecures which are usually given to men of good family and considerable private means. The Reverend Marmaduke Ferrers was the descendant of a race well rooted in the soil, and had, by the demise of two bachelor uncles and three maiden aunts, accumulated to himself a handsome property, in land, and houses, and the safer kind of public securities. These legacies had fallen in at longish intervals, some of the aunts being slow in relaxing their grip upon this world's gear, but had all the wealth of a Westminster or a Rothschild been poured into the Reverend Marmaduke's lap, he would not have renounced the great tithes of Baddesley-with-Arden, or the important, and, in a manner, judicial and dictatorial position which he held as rector of those two small parishes. Mr. Ferrers loved the exercise of authority on a small scale. He had an autocratic mind, but it was a very small mind, and it suited him to be the autocrat of two insignificant pastoral villages, rather than to measure his power against the men of cities. To Hector Giles for getting drunk on a Saturday night, to lecture Joan for her absence from church on Sunday, afforded the rector as much delight as a bigger man might have felt in towering over the riot of a Republican chamber or proroguing a Rump parliament. Mr. Ferrers had been rector of Baddesley thirty years, and in all

that time he had never once thought of taking to himself a wife. He had a lovely old rectory and a lovelier garden; he had the best servants in the neighbourhood, partly because he was a most exacting master, and partly because he paid his housekeeper largely, and made her responsible for everybody else. The whole machinery of his life worked with a delightful smoothness. He had nothing to gain from matrimony in the way of domestic comfort, and there is always the possibility of loss. Thus it happened that although he had gone on admiring Miss Lawford for a round dozen years, talking of her as a most ladylike and remarkably well-informed person, pouring all his small grievances into her ear, confiding to her the most recondite details of any little complaint from which he happened to suffer, consulting her about his garden, his stable, his parish, it had never occurred to him that he should improve his condition or increase his happiness by making the lady his wife.

Yet, throughout this time, Rhoda Lawford had always had it in her mind that, if all other views failed, she would wind up fairly well by marrying the rector. It was not at all the kind of fate she had imagined for herself years ago in the freshness of her charms; but it would be a respectable match. Nobody could presume to pity her, or say that she had done badly. The rector was ten years her senior, so nobody could laugh at her for marrying a youth. Altogether there would be a fitness and a propriety about the alliance, which would be in perfect harmony with the elegance of her person and the spotlessness of her character. On her fortieth birthday Miss Lawford told herself that the time had now come when the rector must be taken seriously in hand and taught to see what was good for himself. A friendship which had been meandering on for the last twelve years must be brought to a head; dangling attention and old-fashioned compliments must be reduced into something more tangible. In a word, the rector must be converted from a friend into a suitor.

It had taken Miss Lawford two years to open the Reverend Marmaduke's eyes, but at the end of those two years the thing was done, and the rector was sighing, somewhat apoplectically, for the approach of his wedding-day, and the privilege of claiming Rhoda for his own. The whole process had been carried out with such consummate tact that Marmaduke Ferrers had not the faintest suspicion that the

matrimonial card which he had drawn had been forced upon him. He believed in his engagement as the spontaneous growth of his own mind. "Strange that I should have known you so long, my Rhoda, and only discovered lately that you were so dear to me," he murmured in his fat voice, as he dawdled with his betrothed in one of those shadowy Warwickshire lanes which seem made for the meanderings of lovers. His Rhoda smiled tenderly; and then they began to talk about the new carpet for the Rectory drawing-room, the Sévres garniture de cheminée which Sir Vernon had given his sister for a wedding present, dwelling rather upon the objective than the subjective side of their position, as middle-aged lovers are apt to do.

"I hope you will not mind my keeping Todd," said the rector presently, pausing to recover his breath, and plucking a dog-rose in absence of mind.

"Dearest, have I any wish in opposition to yours?" murmured Rhoda, but not without a shadow of sourness in the droop of her lips, for she had a shrewd idea that so long as the rector's housekeeper, Mrs. Todd, remained at the Rectory, nobody else could be mistress there.

MY LITTLE TOUR IN WALES.

PART II.

My first view of Welsh scenery was impressive rather than either extensive or picturesque. It consisted of about six square feet, worn by the last month's rain into what by the light of a not too brilliant lantern held close to the ground by an obliging porter, had a decided look of young torrent-beds, and leading to all appearance straight over the waterfall whose roar came deafeningly up through the darkness from under our very feet. The same idea evidently suggested itself to Woffles, but with a directly opposite result. In my case it produced a decided disposition to tread gingerly, and above all things to keep a little in the rear of our corduroy friend with the lantern. Woffles is of her century, impatient of unexplained phenomena. She had never come across a noise of exactly this sort before, and proceeded to its investigation with characteristic promptitude. There was a patter of small feet, a momentary eclipse of the line of illuminated legs, as a small figure trotted stoutly past the lantern and was swiftly absorbed into space and darkness. Perhaps you think that she appreciated the

heroism with which I precipitated myself into space and darkness after her? Not a bit of it. Being reduced to the indignity of being carried for the rest of the way, she avenged herself by trying experiments in plaiting upon my fringe, so that when we at last emerged into the light, I scandalised my punctilious brother-in-law by putting in an appearance with my mane hanging over my forehead in little tight tails, like a racehorse.

We were beyond the actual roar of the stream in the quiet little commercial inn to which we found our way after some ten minutes' walk, and where the sudden arrival at half-past midnight of a very uncommercial party half-a-dozen strong created something of a sensation. But a distinct murmur came floating in on the warm summer air through my open window, while the old church tower looked solemnly in from over the way, and the glow-worms held their tiny torchlight processions among the graves.

Very unlike one's preconceived ideas is quiet little prim Ruabon, when the sun at last comes peering up above the hills, flooding the moist atmosphere in gold, and studding with sparkling gems every blade of the thick green grass in the old churchyard, piled up with rich ancestral mould ever so many feet above the roadway. Ruabon is associated in my mind with coal, and as our flannel acquaintance of yesterday would say, cheap coal "at that." After what I had seen of that awful Black Country, and the pleasant anecdotes of miners and their ways with which Miss Woffles's preserver had filled up such portion of the time as had not been fully occupied with strictly personal details, it had been quite a relief to reach the shelter of our hotel without having had even 'arf a brick hove at me, and to find a clean room, and white sheets, and peaceful little glow-worms gleaming at me through the soft dusk. And this morning the surprise is even more complete. Coal! You wouldn't imagine that any fuel less poetic than beech-logs had ever been heard of in this quiet little country town—its dignity would no doubt be offended if I called it a village—so prettily perched in its niche among the hills. The resources of our hotel, unused to tourist visitations, and pretty fully taxed by its regular customers, whose commercial boots keep sentry over every door, has only been equal to the provision of three rooms. One of these, however, has two beds in it, and the two children and I have been billeted together. Needless to say the golden glory has lost little of

its earliest glow, or the churchyard gems of their most multitudinous sparkle, before my slumbers are brought to a peremptory termination. Some people might be able to sleep on undisturbed while Edith and Woffles play at ball with the sponge, diversifying the game with an occasional parenthetic header into the ready-filled tub. I can't. And perhaps it is as well, for when I wake the ball has just gone through the open window, and Woffles in a long white garment, by no means intended for the use as a bathing-dress to which it has recently been put, is leaning across the sill in a way which promises very soon to send her after it.

So the diamonds are still sparkling, and the shadows broad across the tidy little streets, when we start off on a voyage of discovery, Woffles especially bent on penetrating the mystery of the noise she was so tyrannically prevented from investigating last night. And there, sure enough it is, just at the foot of the hill on which the main portion of the little town stands: a real mountain stream, rushing, roaring, foaming, leaping from rock to rock, swirling away in wrathful eddies as it staggers back from the encounter with some obstacle too firmly planted to be overcome even by its passionate rush. By its side, perched on the very edge, so that the low hanging sprays of Virginian creeper are every now and then dashed on one side as a more headlong rush than usual comes hurtling over the great rocks below, are a score of picturesque little grey stone cottages, thickly covered in this moist climate with mosses and lichens and bright flowering creepers. A little further on the river swirls away to the right, under the high stone arch of the bridge we crossed last night, and leaps and roars away down the widening valley on its way to the Dee. "Oh! Auntie Maggie!" cries a small eager voice, as Woffles stands on the top of the little road-side wall with my arm firmly clasped round her, wide-open eyes sparkling, and every little nerve quivering with excitement—"Oh! Auntie Maggie, what a lot of dirty water!"

Wretched Woffles! I believe in another moment I should have broken out in absolute poetry. But there is no denying it; she is right. I have heard a good deal about the thick whiteness of the snow torrents in Switzerland. But there is no snow here, and it isn't white. Only a thick dirty yellow. Mere undeniable dirt-colour; as matter-of-fact a solution of mud as you

may meet after a heavy rainfall in any London gutter. Of course, the rainfall has been heavy, and a week or so of fine weather will bring it back to its clear brown and green and white again. But just now—

Without another word I whip off Woffles from the wall, and in five minutes more the rush and roar of the desecrated torrent have faded again into a distant murmur and we are strolling under the spreading trees and over the soft sweet shadow-flecked sward of Wynnstay Park. No reminiscence of London here. No "killed" greens, no æsthetic half tints—half smoke, half dirt—like those which mark the trampled turf that grows daily mangier under the tennis of the Square, or affords a feeble and sooty sustenance to the very black sheep of the Park or Kensington Gardens. Nature's own triple-piled velvet this; in Nature's own vividest dye of gold-shot green.

The torrent is as passionate and as muddy as ever as we pass it by-and-by once more on our way to the station, and presently we ourselves are rattling along up the narrowing valley of the Dee, where the line, now reduced to a single track, winds in and out along the foot of the great hills; and quaint grey-stone townlets perched here and there on projecting spurs heave in sight far to the right or left of any possible deviation of our track; then presently put in a brief and still distant appearance at the opposite window; then vanish for a time, only suddenly to reappear on both sides at once, as the train, apparently giving up the attempt to get by without calling, draws slowly up at the little roadside platform.

Presently we work our way closer in among the hills, and another roar rises up and mingles with our own, and we are running along the very edge of the Dee itself. And a fine stream it is. Not quite so tumultuous and passionate as its little younger brother that raves its way so stormily through Ruabon, but sweeping along with a steady fury that is quite ready to break out into a passion at any obstacle that does not instantly submit to be swept out of the way, and which very shortly does so break out, as the picturesque old bridge of Llangollen comes in sight, with its sturdy stone piers holding their own against the rush which has been splitting itself night and day against their sharp edges for the last five hundred years or so.

I wonder whether the modern masonry which walls in the stream just above the

bridge, and on which rests the new railway-station, will stand as well for the same period, and what kind of communication will have replaced the long since obsolete iron road by that time. Let us hope that at all events it will be more in accordance with the views of our cousins from across the "herring-pond," a select party of whom, anxiously awaiting the arrival of our train to proceed with it to Corwen, are sorely exercised by the amount of time required under present arrangements for the "doing of this very one-horse little principality." Six o'clock this morning it was when they left Liverpool, and Llangollen all they've got through with yet. Yes; they reckoned they'd got through with that pretty slick. Crow Castle, up atop of the hill yonder—that don't take long, you know. See that from any part of the place. And the Barber's Hill? Well, yes; a hill's a hill, you know, and there's nothing atop of that but a view, and they reckon there's views enough where they came from. No need to fool around for a couple of hours or more and miss the cars looking at views. And Plas Whatsitsname? Yes. Got a picture of that, they have; old ladies, stove-pipe hats and all. Seen the house itself? Of course they have. Rum old box, all whittled out into apples, and pea-nuts, and devil's-heads, and such-like, you know, like Aunt Dinah's linen-chest. Reckon the inside's pretty much the same; but it didn't run to that you know in an hour and a half. And Vale Crewsis? Wal, that's about the biggest show there. Not likely to leave that row half hoed. Sharp work too, you know. Might have gone inside after all, though, if they'd only known the cars would be a quarter of an hour behind time. Going on already? Yes, sir. To-night? Oh, to-night they were to be at Llanberis. Coach to Bets us Whatsitsname, then train on to Llandudno. Ah! by the way, say now. Do we reckon if Conway Castle could be viewed from the cars? No? Well, they must see if they could miss a train. Anyway they must give an hour at least to Carnarvon Castle—Prince of Wales, you know, and all that kind of thing; and then there was the slate quarries and— Yes, sir. They meant to put the thing through fair and square. A fortnight for the old country, including Scotland—reckoned they'd have to do the Highlands, anyhow. Rob Roy and Walter Scott, you know, and all that—and a month for Europe, and another fortnight for Par's. Back home by the Fall. Yes; they'd have to lay on. But they'd

got it all figured out; and if the cars ran to time, and there wasn't no connections missed, they reckoned they'd a good two days in hand. Say now. Perhaps— But time is up, and the "cars" move on, and somehow, as we cross the picturesque old bridge, newly widened within the last half-dozen years, but not in any way spoiled by the operation, the swollen stream that thunders through its old grey arches seems for the moment to be almost standing still.

It has recovered its activity, however, by the time we have made our way to the hotel, whose narrow little strip of garden, gay with bright flowers and soft with such emerald turf as only such soft moist atmospheres can produce, is only kept from being washed bodily away in its headlong course by the low retaining wall of rough moss-coated stones. It isn't luncheon-time yet by some two hours and a half at the most liberal computation, though, somehow, either clocks move more rapidly or appetites move more slowly in London than in Wales. Anyway, it is clearly impossible for a senior clerk of the Procrastination Department to sit down publicly to luncheon with his wife and family at half-past ten in the morning. So enquiring of the gorgeous head waiter—dress-coated and white-cravated, gold-studded and embroidered-fronted, combed, curled, crimped, and macassared even at this matutinal hour—how best the hungry moments may be beguiled till convention sanctions the customary cutlet, we set off for "Aunt Dinah's Linen-box," more respectfully known as Plas Newydd, once the residence of the famous Old Ladies of Llangollen.

On our way, however, we pass the church, and, like proper tourists, pause to examine it. How is it, I wonder, that whereas when one is at home or staying anywhere on a mere ordinary visit one would as soon think of going into any church one might happen to pass by—except, of course, on Fridays and Saints'-days and other privileged occasions of the kind—as of lionising the larder or the pantry? Now, however, we are sight-seeing, and churches and churchyards are recognised sights all the world over. So we duly admire St. Collen's fane—whoever St. Collen may have been—with its six massive octagonal pillars, its carved oak angels, and its beam with the encouraging inscription, "Y nav i ti Mair, vydd barod bob awr," which no doubt, as we are assured by the old lady who is pottering about the chancel, and who has no doubt

obtained her present happy pitch of deafness, blindness, and toothlessness through too reckless an indulgence in language of the kind, amply proves its having been "conveyed" from the old Abbey of Valle Crucis hard by. Otherwise, and if we were not tourists, there is nothing particularly remarkable about St. Collen's Church unless it be, from a strictly ortho-, or rather, cryptographic point of view, the name of Gruffydd Hierathog inscribed on one of its tombs, and appertaining in life to a poetic gentleman of the sixteenth century, who, let us hope, was never tempted to seek a rhyme for his own name. In the churchyard lie the Old Ladies whose house we are about to visit, and here, too, are various inscriptions of the usual eccentric kind, the following in especial striking me, under the present circumstances, with peculiar force. "Our life"—writes the poetic commemorator of the virtues of the deceased Mr. Patrick Jones—

Our life is but a winter's day—
Some only breakfast and away;
Others to dinner stay and are full fed,
The oldest man but sups and goes to bed.
Large is his debt who lingers out the day:
Who goes the soonest has the least to pay.

Another party, lionisers like ourselves, have been studying tombstone philosophy at the same time, and we leave the churchyard together, evidently bound upon the same expedition. We do not speak to each other, of course. If we were in Switzerland or Italy, or even at Boulogne, six or seven score miles at least nearer our native (Black)heath than we are at present, we should no doubt fraternise, for the time being, and till we got home again, readily enough. But, as we are in a foreign country, propriety is supreme, and though the good old lady who heads the rival party, the very type of a particularly amiable and full-blown cabbage-rose, looks beamingly, now upon Emma, now upon Woffles, and the younger of the two girls—the elder has full occupation in the shape of a lanky specimen of the British youth elaborately got-up in special tourist costume of ingenious design and astounding pattern—makes more than one mute appeal to me out of her bright brown eyes for rescue from her too evident rôle of daisy-picker, no one—that is to say, of course, no one but a civil-engineer—would think of making unintroducted any advance to any member of a party headed by Mr. Adolphus Styffecote. So we straggle down the narrow street and narrower lane side by side in proper speechlessness, not jostling one another when we

can help, but never seeing, hearing, or being in any way aware of one another under any circumstances whatever.

As we reach the wondrous "Portal Door" in the garden walk—and I really wish my little local guide could have hit upon some more adequately sonorous title for this marvellous arrangement in carved and polished black—a third party approaches from the opposite direction, and for half a minute at least the two huge demon faces from Northumberland, grinning grimly at us out of the fantastic blackness, seem to grin a little wider than before in thoroughly demoniac appreciation of the manner in which our three parties stare solemnly and sternly at each other, each unwilling to commit the solecism of ringing the bell for the admission of the rest. After all, however, there is no occasion to regret the delay, for the door itself would supply ample amusement for several half minutes. And the door is only en suite with the rest. The cottage is not lofty. When Wordsworth was invited by the "Ladies" to visit Plas Newydd for the express purpose of writing a sonnet thereanent, he for ever sacrificed in their eyes his reputation as a poet by speaking of it as "a low-roofed cot." The Ladies were mortally affronted, and openly declared that "they could write better poetry themselves," as on the whole, after a careful study of the entire production, I am inclined to think it possible they might have done so. Still, a dozen feet is not high for a two-storeyed edifice, and from the way in which, when we do get in, the attendant young gentleman of party Number Two instantly knocks his hat off his head against the ceiling, whilst Adolphus only escapes the utter destruction of his careful parting by developing wholly unsuspected joints in the hitherto rigid region of his spine, I should say a dozen feet would be a liberal allowance for Plas Newydd. But over this not very extensive surface is spread carved oak enough to furnish forth a couple at least of the biggest shops in Wardour Street. The very kitchen door is ornamented like an abbot's stall or an archbishop's throne. So gorgeously bedight that the old lady with the "stove-pipe hat" and the basket of eggs doesn't imagine it can possibly be intended for the likes of her, and hammers away instead at the more plainly boarded aperture which will some day no doubt afford an entrance to the as yet unfinished wing which General Yorke, the new proprietor, is adding to the

house. Receiving no answer, except from the hollow echo of the unfinished ruins within, the old lady at length walks off to seek some more responsive customer. And at the same moment a shriek from behind the oaken monsters announces that the question of gaining admission for our three parties of visitors has been taken in hand by Woffles, who has settled it by the simple process of clambering up to the top of the iron fence and toppling over head-foremost on the other side. If you suppose that Woffles is in the least disconcerted by the catastrophe you have yet much to learn.

We pretty well fill the quaint little place when we do get in, filing one by one through the black oak porch, supported by elaborately sculptured bed-posts of Charles the First's time, and filled in every nook and niche with wondrous carvings of the four evangelists, each with his appropriate emblem of angel or lion, ox or eagle; and coats of arms royal and noble, and dates decypherable or otherwise, according to the keenness of your eyes and the depth of your black-letter lore, and solemn bas-relief warnings against the "convivial excesses" of intemperance in man and obesity in woman; and, above all, the famous frieze with that unapproachable cat and acorns, whose lack of counterpoise for so many years so sorely exercised the æsthetic souls of the Ladies, till at last, in an auspicious and triumphant hour, they matched Grimalkin featly with the little dog, who still wags his wooden tail at her from the opposite corner of the completed portal.

But just as the garden gate, sumptuous as it was, was promptly eclipsed by the far greater gorgeousness of the actual house door and its porch, so are they in their turn snuffed out, almost with ignominy, by the surpassing splendour of the staircase. Eleven hundred and ninety-two is the date carved conspicuously on some portions of the work. Whether that date applies to the lovely balustrade, with its "squirrel, lion, and mermaid," and its exquisitely twisted balusters and delicately chased handrail, I am not archæologist enough to decide, but if it be so I can only say that the oak sculptors of the twelfth century were sore enemies of the tenth commandment. And there is such a mass of it. The pair of Ladies in the stove-pipe hats and white neckcloths who, after giving their Irish friends and guardians the slip just a hundred years ago, lived so cosily together in this quaintest of carved oak muniment chests for more

than half a century, were celebrities in their way, and drew a little annual crowd of wealthy and distinguished visitors. Madame de Genlis has left us an account of her visit, and of the æolian harp which breathed soft music from her balcony. Lord Edward Fitz-Gerald was tracked hither after his escape in '98, and his memory lingers in the shape of the two carved apes over the mantel-piece in my lady's chamber. Their royal highnesses of York and Orleans vied with each other in the pursuit of their friendly favour. A greater duke than either lunched with them on the little lawn which since has borne his name, not very long before setting out to light up his new strawberry-leaves with the aureole of Waterloo. And everyone who came had not only to conduct himself with befitting respect to the Ladies and the low-roofed cot which sheltered them, but, if they wished to gain admittance on any future occasion, to bring an offering of carved oak.

And its present proprietor has inherited their passion. General Yorke, however, is a sculptor himself, with a taste to appreciate and a purse to pay for the cunning work of his brother craftsman, and when on moonlight nights a pleasant pair of amiable ghosts stroll arm-in-arm, as I am quite sure the ghosts of good old Eleanor Butler and Charlotte Ponsonby do walk through the quaint old rooms in their habits as they lived, depend upon it they chuckle with ghostly gaiety over the remembrance of the day when they brushed the mud from the coat of the wild Eton lad who had been trying so hard to break his neck by galloping his thoroughbred over the slippery heights of Dinas Bran, and stuffed his pockets with oranges in hospitable remembrance of their own tastes "when they were school-boys themselves."

As for this marvellous little room at the foot of the staircase, I don't believe they wait for night, moonlight or otherwise, to visit it. We are in the heart of a fairy forest everywhere. Inside and out, the whole house is incrustated with carvings, exhausting the whole gamut of the graceful and the grotesque. There are many other art-curiosities in the place, from flint implements and agate tazze, armour of Richard the Second, and coins of 550 B.C., antique reliquaries and Cellini cloak-clasps, down to a china "arm of Madame du Barry," and its companion "leg of Madame Vestris," and a huge wood-block portrait of Mr. Joseph Grimaldi for the printing of his benefit bills—enough, indeed,

to furnish a little South Kensington out here in the Welsh wilds. But the impression left everywhere upon one's mind is still pre-eminently an impression of carved oak. Here, in this final chamber—it comes first in the catalogue, and the regular round, of course, but if you have any appreciation of climax you will take it last—we are in the Oak Room, *par excellence*.

Par excellence, indeed! There is oak enough in any corner of any room in the cottage to furnish an "oak wing" to any ordinary mansion. But here, with the exception of a couple of panels of such sixteenth-century embossed leather as it has not often fallen to my lot to see, every inch of everything is black, black oak; and every inch of oak is carved to desperation. The light filters slowly in through not too spacious windows of rich old glass, and it is only bit by bit that you make out the crowded beauties. Now a delicate group of fruit or flowers; now an Italian panel, with Venus and Cupid. Now a grim presentment of presumptuous Marsyas, with justice in gruesome course of application. Then, to take the taste out, comes a graceful female head, startlingly replaced a little farther on by the fierce features of a huge Wild Indian. As for the great Confessional Throne, with the huge grinning mask at the back, through the open mouth of which so many sins have been whispered, and which is still chuckling with true diabolical delight over the savour of them, that in itself is a study for a day, even with unfiltered light to study by.

And then the dear little shady gardens, and the Cathedral Walk, planted with beech and lime in memory of the faithful old servant Mary Carryl, and Eleanor's Bower with its red-letter inscription, "Where the dog Chance howled" when after Lady Eleanor's death Miss Ponsonby in his presence gave away to a friend a book that had once been hers. Dear me! If the gallant general, when his ultimate promotion comes, would only be gallant enough to leave the little low-roofed cot to me, I would not at all complain of his making it a condition of the legacy that I should adopt a permanent riding-habit and stove-pipe, and collect oak carvings.

But one thing I would not do. I would not accept Madame de Genlis's ingenuous advice to the old ladies themselves to adopt children as a means of securing for themselves a happy old age. At all events not children of the pattern of Woffles. The gallant general's collection is not

fenced about with the ordinary severe restrictions as to touching, and I am a little astonished at the freedom with which the engaged young lady of party Number Two is permitted to span her taper waist with the collar of Count D'Orsay's dog Leo, immortalised by Landseer, and her faithful swain to signalise his chivalrous desire of wielding sword and couching spear in her defence by heroic but fruitless efforts to fasten on his limp left hand the shapeless dexter gauntlet of King Richard the Second. What Woffles's exploits in this line might have been is hardly I think to be pictured by the dulled imagination of maturer years. I have sufficient confidence, however, in its being something tolerably astounding to take precautions in the interest of the too confiding general. In such a wilderness of delight in the way of mischief to have merely held Miss Woffles by the hand would have been a very shallow device, and would moreover have entailed keeping my eyes on her all the time. So I have carried her in my arms. And Woffles has beguiled the tedium of enforced mischievousness by surreptitiously abstracting every hair-pin I possess. As the garden door with its grinning monsters closes behind us I stoop to set her down, fancying as I do so that the grey figure springing up the path is somehow familiar to me. Then Woffles fires her train, and the universe disappears behind an avalanche of tumbled hair.

There is no mistake now about the voice which cheerily exclaims:

"Miss Woffles—for a monkey!"

And clawing a hasty rent in my tumbled mane I find myself face to face with the young gentleman in the flannels.

THE ROMANCE OF THE CAFÉ D'ITALIA.

CHAPTER II. AT THE STAR AND GARTER.

IN due time the letter was delivered as Gustave Mas had desired. The solicitor in question was a personal friend of the energetic counsel, and the day after the execution of Gustave Mas he asked his friend to dinner in the following note: "Dear —, dine with me to-morrow at Richmond, Star and Garter, usual time. I have something to say about the poor fellow they hanged yesterday."

"The poor fellow they hanged yesterday," thought the barrister. "He wastes a good deal of unnecessary pity over him. A cold-blooded scoundrel! Besides, it was only the day before the execution I heard him

say he wished he had never soiled his hands by undertaking the case. And what can he have to say about him? The less said the better; the thought of him is enough to spoil one's dinner. Suppose that sort of practical joke were to become fashionable with waiters!"

However, a dinner at the Star and Garter on a summer's evening, with the sun setting over the Thames, and the Surrey woodlands stretching away in the distance, is not to be lightly despised or easily spoilt by thoughts of a dead felon or his doings, so the barrister accepted his friend's invitation.

Apparently both of them, certainly the barrister, appeared to consider the promised communication about their defunct client as the least important part of the evening's proceedings. Indeed, no mention was made of him until coffee appeared and a long cabana was glowing comfortably between the barrister's learned lips.

Then the solicitor spoke.

"I have something to show you which throws some light on that case of ours."

The barrister pricked up his ears.

"Oh, ah, yes. But just tell me first why you ever undertook to instruct counsel. I never quite understood that, and it surprised me. It wasn't the sort of case that could do you any good professionally."

"No good at all, rather the contrary. The fact was I had known Gustave Mas for several years. I used to dine regularly at the Café d'Italia, and he always waited on me and was particularly civil. But somehow I always thought he was naturally superior to his station; he didn't look or speak like a waiter, though he was a very good one. One day a friend who was dining with me there happened to quote a line of Rousseau when Gustave Mas was by. I saw him start, and heard him repeat the quotation to himself in a whisper, and I remember I said, laughing, 'So you have read Rousseau, waiter;' and he replied, 'Autrefois, monsieur, autrefois,' with a sigh. He interested me, and I used to try to draw him out, but he would never talk much, and I never succeeded in finding out whether he had an interesting history. But when he was committed for the murder I went to see him, and, finding him quite friendless, I determined, I hardly know why, to take up the case for him at my own expense. That is all. Now read this."

It was the letter written by the condemned man the night before his death. It was in French, and ran as follows:

"MONSIEUR,—To-morrow I shall die for

the crime I committed. I am not, I was not, mad, as the kind advocate tried to make them believe. I deserve to die, for no man may forestall God's justice to slay even the greatest criminal. But you have been kind to me, and I should like you to know when I am gone that I was not so bad as they thought. If you care to know why I did it, go to my lodgings, Number Fourteen, Garden Court, and under a loose board in the floor close to the window, on the left-hand side, you will find a leather bag. There are papers in it that will tell you something, and then you will guess the rest. I would not tell you this before; you are so kind you might have tried to make them keep me alive, and I am so very weary.

GUSTAVE MAS."

"This," thought the barrister, "is not the style in which a coffee-house waiter writes a letter. Moreover, the spelling is correct, and the writing that of an educated man."

Said the solicitor: "That note reached me a few hours after all was over. Of course I went as soon as I could to Garden Court. I had some difficulty in finding it; it is a dirty slum not far from Drury Lane. I told the Irishwoman who kept the house (a low sort of lodging-house) who I was, and said I wished to see the room that Gustave Mas used to occupy. The woman showed me up to a miserable garret, and stood talking while I surveyed the room. I was just meditating how to get rid of her when a fight in the street below called off her attention, and she left me without ceremony and ran downstairs. The garret had no furniture, and on examining the floor I had no difficulty in finding the loose board by the window. I raised it, and, by groping underneath as far as my arm would go, I found—this."

Here the solicitor produced from under his chair, and held up, a small bag of faded red leather with lock and rusty key.

"I made my way downstairs, gave the woman a shilling, and after bringing the bag to my office I made myself master of its contents; and it was in consequence of what I found in it that I asked you to dine here to-night."

"And the contents are?"

"Papers and letters; most of them quite irrelevant to this matter; but there was a small packet at the bottom which is very important. I have got the papers in it into order. Let me read them to you. Notice first of all that the papers are of three kinds: letters, extracts from a journal, originally kept in a book from which pages

have been torn out, and loose sheets, neither letters nor parts of the journal, which have been written upon at different dates. I will begin with the extracts from the journal."

He held them up, written in French with faded ink on musty paper in a boyish hand.

"Sunday, January, 1858.—The new people that are come to the farm were at church this morning for the first time; monsieur, madame, and their demoiselle. That gave one something to think of at mass. How proud she looked, that demoiselle, with her pale face and large eyes. She had forgotten her Book of Devotions, but I dared not offer her mine."

"Thursday, February, 1858.—The people at the farm came this day to pay a visit of politeness to my aunt. They brought their demoiselle with them, and did present me to her. They said she was at school in a convent at Paris. It may be that is what makes her so proud, so different from other girls. She is certainly prouder than the daughter of the sous-préfet. And yet her name is only plain Jacqueline, like anyone else. She would scarce condescend to salute me, and I, being unused to demoiselles, knew not what to say to her. Ah! when shall I see Paris?"

"April.—Yesterday went with my aunt to Aimée Robbe's wedding feast. And this day is to be marked with a cross of mourning for ever. When the dancing was begun I made bold to dance a quadrille with Mademoiselle Jacqueline, in the which it fell out that I tore her robe sadly at the waist, the same being very beautiful, and sent to her from Paris for that very feast, as I had heard madame tell my aunt before. The young men laughed at me exceedingly, but the demoiselles were glad, as it seemed to me, for none of them had a robe from Paris, and they do not love Mademoiselle Jacqueline, and say she is proud. She turned on me with two eyes like coals of fire, and said something I cannot bear to write. As for me, I said not a word, but went away straightway and wept. And this my eighteenth birthday!"

"April.—Have been thinking to write to mademoiselle to make my humble apologies and entreat her pardon, for I dare not speak to her, but do not feel so shy in writing. Did mention the same yesterday to Monsieur le Curé, when he looked very stern and said the tongue was an evil member, and letter-writing a snare of the Enemy."

"May 1st.—This being the Month of Mary, and my aunt being yet confined to her bed, she sent me, instead of going

herself according to her wont, to church, to place a large bouquet of flowers before Our Lady's altar. As I went across the meadow by the Loire, who should I see coming but Mademoiselle Jacqueline. My heart beat so fast, and I felt my face flush all over as I saluted her. I would fain have said something to her, but my throat felt as dry as dust, and I could not even say, "Bon jour, mademoiselle," which was a great discourtesy. And she went by me with her nose in the air, and only the tiniest inclination of the head. But no sooner was she gone by than I was tempted of the devil to run after her with Our Lady's bouquet, and make as though it had been meant for her—which I did; and went so far in sin as to say I had been carrying it to her with my apologies for tearing her gown. "Then monsieur was carrying his apologies in the wrong direction," said she; "the farm lies the other way"—which brought me to confusion, and showed me that a lie bears one no good. However, she said it not unkindly, with a sparkle in her eyes, and a little laugh like the Angelus bell on a summer evening. And she took the flowers and praised them, and said she would forgive me the tearing of the gown, which indeed was not greatly hurt. And then neither of us seemed to know what to say next. And then she blushed, and said, "Bon jour, m'sieu," so sweetly I wondered how I could ever have thought her proud. And I stood watching her, as she went on her way through the meadow, until she chanced to turn round, I know not why, and saw me; whereat I turned about too and went my way, fearing she might be angry at my staring. And somehow the sun shone so brightly and the birds sang so sweetly that I walked to the church without once remembering that I had no flowers to offer when I got there."

Here the solicitor broke off.

"Now," he said, "we have a letter. There is no date to it, but it is pinned to the last page I have read. And here is something which must be taken in connection with it, I think."

As he spoke he held up a strip of faded narrow blue ribbon, from which depended a heart-shaped locket in tarnished silver; you may see many such, of brass or tin, round the necks of French peasant-women. Then he read. The letter, like the journal, was written in French, with the tender "tutoiement" of "thou" and "thee," written in a different hand from the journal—a neat feminine hand.

"So thou wert jealous, and thou didst think thy Jacqueline cared not to come to the vintage dance to meet thee? Now shalt thou hear the truth.

"She had saved all her allowance to buy thee a little keepsake, and she had not wherewithal to purchase the new shoes she needed. Thou should'st not be jealous. If thou art at the great Cross on the hillside to-morrow after vespers, perhaps thou shalt have thy keepsake, which is indeed nothing but a tiny silver heart slung by a scrap of ribbon so that it may rest against thine. And perhaps thou wilt find something in it that thou hast asked for.—A toi, de cœur, JACQUELINE VERNET.

"P.S.—They tell me Annette Duval was at the dance."

The reader paused; opened the locket carefully, nay, reverently, and displayed a little brown curl of hair daintily tied with faded scarlet silk.

The two friends looked at it in silence—I might have said in awe. They were practical hard-headed nineteenth-century Englishmen; and before you would have found any maudlin sentimentalism in them you might have successfully sucked sentiment from the nether millstone; but here they bowed their heads and were silent, for something told them they were in the presence of Death—Death in the saddest and most beautiful of all the sad and beautiful forms he can assume—a dead man's dead romance.

Presently the solicitor spoke again.

"Now we have more of the journal," and he read:

"So I am to go to Paris to study law and make my fortune. Am I glad? A year ago I should have been very glad. Paris was my aim, my goal. But now—how can I leave her? And yet, if I go not, how can I ever marry her? And she will wait for me; aye, she will wait; no fear for that. And the love of her will make me so great, so strong, I shall succeed—I must."

"The next extract is dated in Paris a year after the last.

"A whole year gone, a whole long year, and still I am in Paris, but oh, it is far, so very very far, this beautiful Paris, from Touraine, my own, our own Touraine, and the pleasant land by the Loire. A whole long year and she is true to me still, though she has wooers enough, they say. But she is true, and she will be—Our Lady will keep her so. I stood to-day upon the Pont Neuf, and watched the Seine flow by, and I thought, 'Oh, that this fair flowing Seine were our

own dear Loire, and I would set my sweetest, tenderest thoughts on its bosom, and it would bear them far away into the vineland to lay them at my darling's feet as she sits by the river, as we so often sat together in the summer days at home."

"Then comes part of a letter, in the feminine hand:

"MY DEAREST,—How can I thank thee enough for thy beautiful present? Never have I seen such a ring, with its two little hearts and the true lover's knot. I put it on to-day, and it shall never leave my finger. Thou wilt bury it with me; wilt thou not? But thou wilt ruin thyself for thy Jacqueline; it is not right to spend so much money upon her; thou wilt have none for thy pleasures and thy friends, and thou hast need of both now thy Jacqueline is not with thee. And yet, dearest, she is so selfish, thy Jacqueline, she likes best to think of thee all alone by thyself, thinking of her while she is thinking of thee; and, most of all, at that hour when she knows thou art thinking of her as she is of thee. For did we not vow we would? And thou art lonely? And thou dost not love the other students? Then must thou come quickly home, and she will console thee, and make up for all that is wanting."

"Now we come to the last letter; it is in a different hand from either of the other two, and is dated more than a year after the one I have just read.

"MY DEAR, DEAR CHILD,—May God give thee strength to bear this great trouble. Alas! it is but too true. Her ring—thy ring—was seen on his finger, as we have learnt since, and the day after the young Englishman left she disappeared. One who knew her reports that he saw her at Blois with a stranger who looked like an Englishman. We know no more than that, except that they say his name was M. Robert. We pray much for thee; may the good God keep thee.—Thy old friend and tutor,

"JEAN-BAPTISTE MALAIS."

"That is the end of the letters and the journal. On this sheet of paper is some writing dated ten years after that letter at Vienna.

"All these years I have sought her through Europe, and have found her not. My money is well-nigh spent. I know not what to do. But one day I shall find her, I shall find her—I know it well—and she will come back to me, and love will cast out fear and shame. And him too I shall find, and my ring upon his finger,

and then—and then—in that hour when I do find him, may God have mercy on his black soul, for verily I will have none.'

"Here is another, five years later, dated at London.

"All my heritage is spent. I can search no further for her. I am forced to earn my bread as a servant. It seems as though I were never going to find her, but I shall, and him too—I know it, I know it.'

"London again, written just eighteen months ago.

"Waiting—always waiting—and the end seems no nearer. Only I grow weary—so very weary—and I have to toil on as a servant, and my heart is sick that I have no money to go back to see Touraine. For Touraine brought her back to me just as she used to be, and when I looked on the Loire the pain and the years were blotted out. But now I shall not see it any more for ever. Sometimes I think the hour must be at hand; for while I could go back sometimes to Touraine I gathered new strength and hope for the search, but now this is taken from me, and perhaps it is because at last I am to find my darling soon.'

As the solicitor read the last words his voice trembled, and he put the paper down very quietly and said: "That is all."

For several minutes there was silence in the room where the two friends sat in the gathering twilight. Then the barrister said: "Do you mean to take any further steps in the matter?"

"No; the past is the past; and Gustave Mas did not appear to have any friends who would care to know that there is anything to be said that was not said at the trial. Besides, what do we know? The poor fellow may have been off his head—may have been totally mistaken as to Reginald Richards. The man he met and killed may have been utterly innocent of wronging Jacqueline Vernet, if she ever was wronged. We gathered that the name of the man she fled with was M. Robert."

"That may have been assumed."

"Of course. But even if we could prove anything, what good would it do? But we can't; we know absolutely nothing."

Silence again.

"I don't think he was mistaken," said the barrister—"that is, if Jacqueline Vernet ever was wronged. And I believe she was, and that the sin found out the sinner after all those years. But still, even if we could prove it, it were better to leave the dead in peace. It is a queer world," he continued. "There were you and I strain-

ing every nerve to save that poor Frenchman's life, supposing ourselves to be his best friends, while all the time we were, in reality, his worst enemies; for he was longing to die, and none were so kind to him, if the truth were known, as the jury that convicted and the judge who sentenced him."

"Except," put in the solicitor, "the hangman who hanged him."

So the dead were left in peace—such peace as each of them, according to the measure of his doings in the flesh, might find in the presence of the Truth.

CHAPTER III. THE SILENT HOUSE BY THE SEINE.

IT is New Year's Eve in Paris; five o'clock in the afternoon; and snow everywhere.

Snow carpeting the alleys of the Bois de Boulogne, where shivering rabbits sit up to listen, ears erect, to the sound of voices and merry laughter, borne on the still winter air, from the skaters on the lakes; snow in the Champs Elysées, where the sledges are gliding rapidly homewards, with jingling of bells, and glances of bright eyes and glowing of soft cheeks half buried in sealskin and sable; snow in Belleville and St. Antoine, where shivering workmen huddle sullenly together by fireless stoves, cursing the government and longing for bread and a revolution; and snow on the boulevards, covering the little wooden booths annually erected on the pavement, and creeping into the boots of the crowds that are out this New Year's Eve all buying presents for to-morrow, the great Jour de l'An. What a scene it is! All Paris is busy buying, except a yet more busy minority who are selling. Here is a great lady, her coupé laden with bonbonnières from Boissier or Marquis; there a stout old gentleman staggering under the weight of the presents which are destined to delight madame and the children to-morrow. Now it is a poor woman of the people, who carefully counts out the sous for a gay necktie for her husband and a piece of gingerbread for the little one at home; and yet again, a couple of Englishmen, arm in arm, their faces wearing that peculiar look as though ashamed to confess themselves amused which is so dear to the hearts of our countrymen abroad.

Just opposite the Maison Dorée, at the corner of the Rue Lafitte, two men are selling little jumping dolls, ingenious enough, for the modest sum of one sou apiece. The dolls are jumping with all the vivacity becoming to a French doll,

and a little crowd has collected to watch them: old people, workmen, and soldiers are all gazing with grave interest at a spectacle which would not arrest the attention of as many children in an English town.

Listen to the marchand—he is a good specimen of his class:

“Voilà, mesdames et messieurs—le petit Zoulou et le petit sauteur Américain! un sou à choisir! C’est la ruine du marchand! un sou la pièce—n’importe laquelle! Le voilà, le petit diable! Regardez, madame, qu’il saute bien,” and the fellow turns to a woman standing before him in the crowd.

A woman of middle age, one would say, her thin figure clothed in shabby black, all too thin for the time of year; neat withal, with the indescribable Parisian neatness. A sad, tired face is hers; a face as of one who fights the life-battle daily, hourly, and fights it hard. The features are pinched and drawn, and the hair, combed neatly under the black bonnet, is more grey than brown. She has delicate small hands, but they are terribly thin, and worn with needlework.

She seems to have drifted without knowing it into the crowd before the dancing dolls, for she is certainly paying small heed to them; her head is turned away, and she is gazing with weary wistful eyes up the gas-lit Boulevard Montmartre. And the people are pushed against her and jostle her, but she heeds them not. Hers is the only face just there that mars the pleasant festal harmony of the people. Just at this moment the two Englishmen elbow their way through the press to look at the dancing dolls. One of them, muttering something about children at home, draws a handful of loose coin from his pocket to make a purchase. In doing so his arm strikes that of the haggard-eyed woman, and she turns round with a start. For an instant her eyes rest greedily on the gold and silver lying in the Englishman’s palm. Then suddenly her thin white fingers clutch his arm, and she speaks with terrible voluble eagerness.

“Monsieur, if you are a Christian, for the love of Jesus help me to a morsel of bread to-night, only a morsel of bread.”

Both the Englishmen start back frightened—not by her words, surely, which are only a common beggar’s formula, nor even by the wild despairing eagerness of her voice, but frightened, as well they may be, by a certain something in her eyes, something which neither of them can have seen before in a human face, or he would know what it is—something which makes the

man addressed thrust some silver quickly into her hand, and pull his companion, nothing loth, away.

And the woman says no word of thanks, but pushes roughly through the people, who make way for her with scared faces and a shudder and a whispered word as she goes by. And down the boulevard she strides, on and on through the holiday-makers, who turn to stare after her, always with that whispered word upon their lips.

For a black devil sits on each shoulder and gibbers in her ear as she goes; and the one is called Hunger, and the name of the other is—Madness.

And the two Englishmen recover their spirits, and think they will go to dinner; and to dinner they go, and fare sumptuously at the Café Riche.

And the theatres open, and the crowds wax thicker and more cheerful, and the cafés are filled, and merry New Year’s parties meet, “pour faire reveillon un peu partout,” as they say, and through it all, her thin fingers clenched over the coins that her poor sick brain knows not how to use, far on into the night this woman wanders through the streets.

And so the old year died that night, and the new year had its birth; and everywhere men’s hearts were glad, for the past was gone, with all its sins and sadnesses, and another time had begun, and all things were made new.

Hard by the river Seine, almost in the shadow of the great cathedral’s eastern wall, there stands a silent house. Men come there, and speak in whispers, and pass out again in silence.

On that bright New Year’s morning, when the sun flashing on beautiful Paris in her stainless robe of white gave her a loveliness yet more lovely than she is wont to wear—on that New Year’s morning the two Englishmen said they would go and look at the Morgue.

They entered. Only one of the terrible twelve metal beds was occupied. The corpse was that of a woman. The Englishmen started when they saw her.

“Why, that is the face of the woman you gave the money to yesterday! And yet it cannot be; look at the face, how different it—”

“Yes, it is she; we can’t see her eyes now, that makes the difference.”

An official approached them.

“Do you know what that woman’s name was?” one of the Englishmen enquired.

"There was a name found upon her—mais, que voulez vous? The guests who lodge in this hotel like to travel incognito, and mostly they have travelled far and taken many names before they come here. Besides, what does it matter who they were? We know what they are now."

The fellow spoke with a grim cynical jocosity, begotten of his occupation and his familiarity with hideous forms of death.

"And what was the name?"

"You may see it on the list, monsieur, and another name that was found with it—a foreign name—I cannot pronounce it rightly. But there is the list." He pointed to the wall opposite to the corpse, on which hung those ghastly records of death and despair. The list for the old year was full, that for the new year contained the description of only one Unknown—the ink was scarcely dry.

The description ran as follows:

"Number nine hundred and fifty; sex, feminine; age, forty; marks, silver locket with names, Jacqueline Vernet, Reginald Richards; date, 1861."

"Did you know anything of her, messieurs? If so, the authorities will receive any information."

Without a word the two friends passed out of the presence of death into the bright frosty sunshine and the holiday crowds upon the quai. It was not until they had walked some distance that the silence between them was broken.

Then one said: "So you were right that evening at Richmond; there was as much justice in it as crime."

And the other: "Did you see how calm she looked? I like to think they have met again at last."

And the dead lay still in the awful silent house, and none came to seek her or to claim her for his own. And many came into the silent house that day; and some came from idleness, and some to seek their dead.

There came a philosopher, and he gazed on her and said: "This dead one is wiser than I; she knows the secret, and I am only guessing."

And there came a Christian, and he gazed on her and said: "This is surely one who sleeps, and dreams of the face of Christ."

And simple folk came; and as they looked on her the tears rose 'up to their eyes, and a great sweetness stole into their souls; and they went their way, saying: "Death is less terrible than we thought."

For her face was as the face of a little child that has fallen asleep in the sunshine.

TOPOGRAPHICAL VICISSITUDES.*

I RESIDED at Guînes in a street called the Rue du Temple. In front of my windows stood a big gloomy building, which the people of the town told me was the old Temple of the Huguenots. Nevertheless, I had ascertained with certainty that the Guînes Temple, so famous in the seventeenth century, had been pulled down at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in October, 1685. I afterwards discovered that the sombre edifice which darkened our street was the Consistoire, or official place of meeting of the authorities and notables of the "Religion Prétendue Réformée."

In pursuing my researches on this subject I often found, in the acts of former notaries at Guînes—for instance, in last wills and testaments—the following formula: "I will that after my death my body shall repose in the cemetery of those of the R.P.R." Did there exist, therefore, at that epoch, at Guînes, a special place of burial for the Huguenots? Where was it situated? I certainly found in the archives of the locality that at the time of the Revolution a spot, to be set apart as a cemetery for non-Catholics, had been selected and its limits laid down. But I clearly made out that this piece of ground, lying at the entrance of the Parcage on the site now used as a cattle-market, was not the ancient cemetery of "those of the religion pretending to be reformed."

I was also told of an old cemetery once existing at St. Blaise. Some still call it "le cimetière des chiens"—the dogs' cemetery. Why, I know not. But what I do know respecting it is, that this cemetery has never served for the Huguenots. It was the cemetery attached to St. Blaise's chapel at the time when that faubourg of Guînes was called Mellak. That, however, belongs to a very old story, and has no connection with our present subject. Where, then, was the Huguenots' cemetery situated?

One fine day I found mentioned in a deed the sale of a garden, adjoining at one end the land of X.; at the other end the Parcage; on one side the land of Z.; and on the other side the cemetery of those of the R.P.R. And I often found the same indication reproduced under different forms in notaries' acts, which consequently enabled me to affirm that the Huguenots' cemetery at Guînes was situated some-

* Supplemental to The Huguenots in Calais.

where in the Parçage, without being able to determine its exact and authentic position.

Apropos to the meeting of the French and English kings—Henry the Eighth and François the First—at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, I had read that the king of England had caused to be built on an eminence at the gates of Guînes a sumptuous glass palace (anticipating the Crystal Palace), in which he gave magnificent fêtes; and that in one of those réunions he fell in with a young and charming demoiselle named Anne de Boleyn—the same person whom he married some twelve years afterwards; and in consequence of which said marriage, the Pope having set his face against it, the change of religion in England took place.

In Windsor Castle there is a picture by Holbein, representing with great exactness all the details of the Champ de Drap d'Or interview. A reduced copy of that picture is in my possession; and by comparing the former state of things with the present topography of Guînes I have come to the conclusion that the site where Henry the Eighth built his superb ball and banqueting house is no other than that now occupied by M. Popieul's spacious boarding-school.

On the other hand, the historians who relate the capture of Guînes by the Duc de Guise, in January, 1558, assert that he had established his quarter general of attack on a rising ground to the south-east of Guînes, and that from thence, by means of a formidable battery of thirty-five cannon, he contrived to obtain the mastery of that strong and renowned citadel. There exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris an old engraving representing this feat of arms. I possess a copy. On close examination, it becomes evident that this battery was planted on the spot where Henry the Eighth's palace stood, exactly where M. Popieul's school is now.

In November, 1859, when that gentleman dug the foundations of his present residence in the Parçage, on the Boulevard Blanchard, the workmen brought to light an abundance of human bones. I carefully watched the excavations; and from the regularity of the graves, the symmetrical position which the skeletons occupied, and several other suggestive details, I was convinced that it really had been a cemetery, and not an improvised burial place into which bodies had been thrown pell-mell after a battle.

While this was going on, I found in other notaries' deeds more precise indica-

tions as to the situation of the cemetery for professors of Calvinist opinions—notably, under the date of April 29, 1687, an act of sale by Noel Pichon of five quarterons of land enclosed by quick fences and by ditches, situated in the Parçage, which formerly served as a cemetery for people of the R.P.R. And I have been able to discover successive deeds recording the transfer of this very piece of land until it came into the possession of its present owner. The ground now occupied by M. Popieul's school is verily the spot where the Huguenots of Guînes and its environs were buried from 1579 until October, 1685.

These various destinations of one identical locality are curious, and, I think, deserving notice. Where Henry the Eighth met the wife who was to be the cause, the pretext, the occasion, of England's schism, and where costly and memorable entertainments were given; where the Duc François de Guise took his stand to recapture Guînes from the English, who had held it ever since 1361; where, for a century, the Protestants of the Guînes district had established a burial place for their co-religionists; there, in 1880, stands a prosperous House of Education for English lads, all Protestants.

Strange vicissitudes of five quarterons of land! To those who can see in this humble notice only the puerile exultation of an antiquary who has made a piquant and curious discovery, I reply that it will at least serve to fix in the memory the dates and the sequence of interesting historical events.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXXIV. (CONTINUED.)

"THE entertainment you furnished," continued Harold, "was princely. No wonder your friends were always ready to stand by you; you gave them ever of your best, and there was no stint to your generosity. After dinner we adjourned to the theatre, some score or so of gentlemen, flushed with wine and eager for pleasure. But you, Mauvain, were cool and collected; I have noticed that wine does not intoxicate you, and that in the midst of the greatest excitement you never commit yourself to an indiscretion of speech. This is one of the qualities which have enabled you to retain your supremacy over those of weaker minds with whom you associated. You spoke of the girls, whose performances we were about to witness, certainly with enthu-

isasm, but at the same time with moderation and self-possession. You implied that you were in a sense their master. It seemed as if you said: 'I will show something of rare excellence, but understand that it is mine.' There was no question on our part as to your right, and when the sisters appeared, and danced and sang, we envied you the possession of a prize so exquisite. At the conclusion of the performance some among us were wild for an introduction to your fair ones, and I remember your saying, gravely and with decision: 'Gentlemen, the play is over; Good-night.' They took the hint and departed; and I was also about to depart when you begged me to remain. 'On one condition,' I said; 'that you afford me another glimpse of these strangely beautiful girls.' 'You shall be gratified,' you replied, and asked me, with the air of a conqueror, if I was smitten. Now, Mauvain, let me make the confession to you that I was deeply agitated by what had occurred. The girls were so different from any I had seen—there was so genuine an air of innocence and simplicity about them—they were so beautiful, so young, and so apparently guileless, that it was with difficulty I could bring myself to believe they were not pure-minded. You convinced me to the contrary; you spoke of them lightly and flippantly, and introduced into your remarks so much of world-wisdom that I accepted these fair creatures with the brand you placed upon them, and strove to think they were what you said they were. It pained me to the heart to do so, and frequently my better self whispered to me: 'It is impossible; believe him not.' I was compelled to depart early in the morning, and I had a task to perform before I left with reference to a commission for a piece of sculpture—I was at that time an enthusiast in my art; I left you to execute my task, saying I would join you in an hour. It was an hour past midnight when I returned, and then, to my surprise, I found you in the company of the scoundrel manager; you and he were gambling for high stakes, higher, I saw in an instant, than such a man as he could afford to play for. However, it was no business of mine, and, having conceived an intolerable aversion to the fellow, I sat down, and watched with pleasure the tortures you were inflicting upon him by winning from him sums of money which it was impossible he would ever be able to pay. No one could

excel you in this kind of work; your coolness, your finesse, your imperturbable good-temper, were terrible weapons against a man of low breeding and indifferent education, who trembled with eager greed at every shuffle of the cards, and railed at fortune in the coarsest and vulgarest terms. I whispered to you once: 'What is your object, Mauvain?' 'To ruin this scoundrel irretrievably,' you replied; 'to punish him for impertinence against my goddess, and release her for ever from his guardianship.' It was reasonable enough, I thought, and I wished you success in your endeavour. Success was yours, for fortune was on your side, and every ticking of the clock added to the entanglement of the scoundrel. It is unnecessary, Mauvain, unless you wish it, for me to continue my description of what passed during that night; it has already been related by Margaret Sylvester in tones which are ringing now in my ears."

"Consider, then," said Mauvain, "that the story of the night—I am beginning to weary of it, Harold—is finished, and come at once to what it is evident you desire to say. Upon that point I am curious."

"The gambling duel is over," said Harold, "and the scoundrel is ruined. In the intervals of the shuffling and cutting of the cards certain words passed between you and your antagonist which were evidently not intended for my ears, and of which the purport was not plain; but I asked for no explanation, not feeling myself justified. You and I are standing in the clear morning's light outside the hotel; my horse is saddled, and I am ready to depart. The past vanishes, Mauvain. I see you, with no signs of fatigue upon your face; you are calm and collected, and, your hand in mine, are wishing me good-bye. There is something very sweet and pure in the air; the town lies hushed in sleep; the windows of the hotel we have just quitted are beaming with rosy colour. It comes upon me to speak once more of the girls we left sleeping side by side. I say to you: 'But for your assurance, Mauvain, I should never have believed that an impure thought could reside in the hearts of either of these sisters, especially of the younger.' 'Were you ten years older, Harold,' you reply, 'you would not find it difficult to believe. Let me undeceive you; the girls are not sisters. They call themselves so for their own purposes. It is probable, Harold, that we shall not meet

again for months. Take this piece of wisdom with you in your travels : never believe in a woman's looks or a woman's words ; the fairer the face the falsier the woman.' And having refreshed and strengthened me with this cup of poison, you bade me farewell. It was two years before we met again, and from the time of that reunion we have seldom parted but for a few days or weeks. In those two years I travelled and saw much, and I can honestly say that I never lost the memory of a face I saw but on the night of our last meeting ; and when, returning, I met Clarice once more, and in your company, I said, 'Mauvain is right ; the fairer the face, the falsier the woman.' From that day I lived two lives—an outward life of pleasure and excitement and unmeaning protestation ; an inner life of dreams and fancies and pure imaginings. In the actual life there was no sweetness or freshness—and it was real ; in the dream life there was truth, there was purity, there was innocence—and it was a delusion. You had most bitterly proved it to me. And thus until this day it has remained."

Harold paused, and all the tenderness departed from his voice. Rising, he confronted Mauvain, and with a stern look, said : "I have respected your confidence, in the belief that no deceit was practised upon me, and that I have not unwittingly been made a party to a dishonourable action. This touches me more nearly perhaps than you imagine. You are a brave man and a gentleman ; you will not deny me my right. I demand an explanation of you."

"Do you threaten, Harold ?"

"No ; I simply insist upon my right."

"Harold," said Mauvain, with deliberation, "let this matter rest ; it will be better for both of us. We have been friends ; let us continue so."

"It is not possible," said Harold, "that I should ever touch your hand again in friendship unless you satisfy me that you have not used me unworthily."

"You will not be advised ?"

"I take my own course. God knows where it will lead me, but I am resolved."

"You link yourself with that woman—Margaret Sylvester ; you stand with her against me ?"

"Why," exclaimed Harold, in so scornful a tone that the blood rushed into Mauvain's face ; but almost in the same moment he forced a smile to his lips, "it would almost appear that you are appealing to me for championship ! Then the Mauvain of to-day is not the Mauvain I have hitherto known."

"Have your way," said Mauvain, with a light laugh. "What is it you require ?"

"The truth."

"You shall have it, Mr. Dreamer, naked and unvarnished."

"I expected no less. You are not made of the metal that is daunted by consequences. On the night upon which our fate seems to hang, you told me that Margaret and Clarice were not sisters. Did you believe this ?"

"Upon my honour, Harold, it is a problem. I believe in so little ! All is fair in love and war."

"We were not at war ; we were friends, and I would have defended you to the death."

"All is fair, then, in love, without the war ; and right or wrong, I fancied you had an eye for the fair one who had captivated me."

"For Clarice ?"

"Yes."

"You were not mistaken. I loved her !"

"Harold !"

"With all my heart and soul, I loved her ! Had I believed her pure, no power on earth could have prevented me from asking her to be my wife. Do you admit now that I have a right to an explanation ?"

"Yes ; but I did not suspect—having no reason to do so—that your heart was so deeply engaged."

"You judged from yourself ?"

"Yes."

"And if you had learned otherwise, Mauvain, would you have been diverted from your purpose ?"

"I think not, Harold ; I was never given to self-sacrifice."

"Answered honestly. And now you can tell me ; did you believe these poor girls to be sisters ?"

"In truth, Harold, I did not consider too curiously. Their master was such an incorrigible scoundrel that it was impossible to trust him or place faith in his words. He said they were sisters."

"Then you spoke falsely when, without question on my part, you told me that they were not ?"

"You will have to answer to me, Harold, for the insult."

"I shall be ready ; we shall neither of us flinch from what is to follow. I repeat that you spoke falsely to me when you told me Margaret and Clarice were not sisters."

"I invented a fiction to save you pain. It was the easiest way, I thought, to prevent you from taking the affair too seriously to heart."

"A proof that you yourself admitted there was a difference between these girls and those with whom you classed them. Their scoundrel-master, Mauvain—did he tempt you by the lie that they were of an easy, complying nature, and ready to fall into your princely arms?"

"No; he extolled them for their virtue and their modesty."

Harold caught his breath, and recoiled a step from Mauvain, exclaiming: "How completely Margaret Sylvester was justified in asking us whether we were men or monsters!"

"You wished for the truth, Harold, and I am giving it you."

"And having learnt this from the lips of the man who knew them best, you deliberately laid a plan for their betrayal!"

"Spare me your heroics, Harold, and make an end as quickly as possible."

"It is clear to me now. You won of the scoundrel a sum of money which it was impossible he could pay, and you bargained with him for Clarice. He, knowing your power and influence, knowing that you could hunt him from place to place, and utterly ruin him, sold you a pure and helpless girl, and left her to your mercy."

"There is a slight flaw in your indictment. The bargain was of his suggesting, not of mine."

"But you consented to it?"

"Yes, I consented to it, knowing from experience how easily women are consoled. Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly. I now understand the meaning of that expression of sadness which never for a moment left Clarice's face; I now know why I found her so often in tears, and why, when by chance our conversation touched upon purity and innocence in woman, she turned from me in grief and distress. Poor child! how she suffered! and how deep must have been her shame and sense of degradation that she should have kept her heart closed to the offer of sympathy and help from one in whom she sometimes said she could have believed, had not her faith and her hope and her trust been irretrievably shattered! Mauvain, from this moment I renounce your friendship—you are no longer my friend! Had I known earlier what I know now, I should have proclaimed war against you with all the strength and earnestness of my soul. The knowledge comes too late to me that your heartless cynicism and cold disbelief in aught that is pure in woman's breast have robbed me of my dearest hope.

I look back upon myself with contempt for having been so misled and deceived. Not yours all the blame; I should have had the strength to resist. You have been like an evil spirit walking by my side, pointing out corruption, poisoning what seemed sweetest and was fairest to the eye. But even now I should be thankful, for in casting you from me I seem to regain something of my boyish trust." He looked towards the window with a sad, strange smile. "The air seems fresher, Mauvain—the sky brighter; I shall have a better understanding of Nature's voice and signs. Before I go, grant me one favour; I have asked it before, and you have refused. My sculptured group of Ranf and Evangeline stands yonder; destroy it!"

"It is yours, Harold; I give it to you freely. Do what you will with it."

For a moment Harold swayed towards Mauvain; with a quick and angry motion he pulled himself back as it were, and saying, "Farewell!" left the room.

Mauvain, without stirring, listened to the retreating footsteps of the man who had been his friend, and for whom he entertained more of love than for any living human creature; and then he sank into a chair, resting his head upon his hand. He was roused by the sound of heavy crashing blows without, and going to the window he saw, scattered about the garden, the marble group of Ranf and Evangeline shattered to pieces.

CHAPTER XXXV. THE LOVERS.

HAROLD cast no backward glance to Mauvain's house; he walked straight from it to the woods. Some time during the night he would redeem his promise to Margaret Sylvester, and tell her all he knew of the story of Clarice; in the meantime he felt the necessity of solitude and self-communing.

"In a new world, and without a friend," he thought, "I am commencing a new life. I bid good-bye to dreams; I must work, as other men do in the Silver Isle. Who will accept the labour of my hands, in return for food and shelter? To pass my days in indolence, and beg for food, would be an added shame to the many that lie heavy on my manhood. Who takes me as a servant will have a sorry bargain. On my word I have half a mind to go and offer myself to the hunchback. There is humour in the idea. Unless I am mistaken in him, he would not turn me from his hut. If nothing better offers, I will visit him in his mountain home, after I have fulfilled my promise

to Margaret. Mauvain, a sword is hanging over your head which, if you are vulnerable, will make your soul bleed."

He sat upon the trunk of a tree whose branches, bending over him, formed a canopy through which he saw the clouds sailing peacefully on. He lay and watched them with tender, regretful spirit.

"How sweet is the gathering twilight! Resting here within this peaceful solitude, I can realise how false has been the glare and glitter of my days. Better far to have been a woodman, with wife and children, stirred by no other ambition than that which is compassed by love and labour. Let me dream of what might have been."

And so he lay and dreamed, and the past took new shape and form. The woman he loved was his; he had rescued her from the peril which threatened her, and they lived a happy, impossible life, in which all the best and purest of his young ambitions and hopes were realised. What brought Evangeline into his dreams? She was there, and took her share in the unreal happiness upon which he fed, in defiance of the stern reality which moved around his dreams.

He was aroused by a murmur of voices, which at first seemed part of his fancies. The illusion passed, he opened his eyes.

Within a few yards of him stood two beings, a man and a girl. He recognised the girl instantly. Evangeline, most beautiful and fair, lithe and graceful, gazing with eyes of love upon her companion, a manly young fellow in the garb of a fisherman. They stood hand in hand, and as they moved away the young man passed his arm around her, and bent his face to hers.

"Theirs is the springtime," mused Harold; "I must learn the truth."

Rising, he walked after them; hearing his steps, they turned and faced him.

"Once more we meet," said Harold, with a courteous salutation to Evangeline. "Do you not recognise me?"

Evangeline did not reply. The vague remembrance she had of him needed stirring into life.

"I perhaps know you," said the young man, "although we have never met. Are you Mauvain?"

"My name is Harold." He looked once more in a questioning way at Evangeline.

"Do you not remember, I brought you to the Silver Isle, and my last words to you were, 'Princess of the Silver Isle, I kiss your fairy fingers.'"

"I remember you now. You came first to the isle with Ranf and me."

"It is so. You look upon me with avoidance. Why?"

"I have heard something of what passed between you and my mother."

"Not all?"

"Joseph," said Evangeline, averting her face from Harold; "let us go."

"Come, then." And Joseph held her more closely to his side.

"A moment, pray," said Harold softly; "you have nothing to fear from me. I must see her whom you call mother, for her sake and yours."

"For mine!"

"Yes, fair maid, for yours. Will you conduct me to her? I do not know her house."

"You can follow us," said Joseph; "we are on our way home."

"I thank you. You bear a likeness to Margaret Sylvester."

"I am her son."

Harold gazed from Evangeline to Joseph, and from Joseph to Evangeline, with so much meaning in his eyes that the girl blushed; but in his manner there was no offence; it was at once tender and solicitous.

"May your lives be happy and peaceful! I will follow you to Margaret Sylvester's house."

They wended their way in silence; even between Evangeline and Joseph there passed no word; the presence of the stranger seemed to cast a cloud over their young hearts.

Margaret Sylvester, seeing Harold approach the house, ran out to meet him.

"You have come!" she cried.

"I have come," he replied, "and the seal is off my lips."

"Enter, then," she said, with a beating heart, and led the way into the house.

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CHAPTER VI. "LOVE MAKETH ALL TO GONE MISWAY."

AUNT RHODA was not a person to be set at defiance, even by Daphne, who was by no means a tractable spirit. She had said, "Come to the Rectory," and had said it with such an air of offended dignity that Daphne felt she must obey, and promptly, lest a worse lecture should befall her. So directly after luncheon on the following day she changed her gown, and prepared herself for the distasteful visit. Madoline was going to drive to Warwick with her father, so Daphne would have to perform her penance alone.

It was a lovely afternoon in the first week of May, the air balmy and summer-like, the meadows looking their greenest before the golden glory of buttercup time. Yonder in the reedy hollows the first of the marsh marigolds were opening their yellow cups, and smiling up at the yellow sun. The walk to Arden Rectory was something over a mile, and it was as lovely a walk as anyone need care to take; through meadows, beside flowery hedgerows, with the river flowing near, but almost hidden by a thick screen of willows; and then by one of the most delightful lanes in the county, a green arcade of old elms, with here a spreading oak, and there a mountain-ash, to give variety to the foliage.

Daphne set out alone, as soon as she had seen the carriage drive away from the door, but she was not destined to go her way unaccompanied. Half way down the avenue she met Mr. Turchill, strolling at a

lazy pace, a cigar in his mouth, and a red setter of Irish pedigree at his heels.

At sight of Daphne he threw away his cigar, and took his hands out of his pockets.

"I was coming up to the Hill to ask somebody to play a game of billiards, and everybody seems going out," he said.

They had known him so long in an easy-going neighbourly way that he almost took rank as a relation. Daphne, who had spent so much of her life away from home, had naturally seen less of him than anybody else; but as she had been a child during the greater part of their acquaintance, he had fallen into the way of treating her as an elder brother might have done; and he had not yet become impressed with the dignity of her advancing years. For him she was still the Daphne he had romped with in the Christmas holidays, and whose very small pony it had been his particular care to get broken.

"I met Madoline and Sir Vernon going to Warwick. Why go to Warwick? What is there for anyone but a Cook's tourist to do in Warwick? But I thought you would be at home. You haven't a bad notion of billiards, and you might have helped a fellow to while away an afternoon."

"You are like the idle boy in the spelling-book story, wanting someone to play with you," said Daphne, laughing at him. He had turned, and was walking beside her, the docile setter following meekly, like a dog who felt that he was of no consequence in the world now that the days of sport were done.

"Well, the hunting's all over, don't you know, and there's no more shooting, and I never cared much for fishing, and I've got such a confoundedly clever bailiff that he

won't let me open my mouth on the farm. So the days do hang rather heavy on a fellow's hands."

"Why don't you take to Alpine climbing?" suggested Daphne. "I don't mean Mont Blanc—everybody does that—but the Matterhorn, or Monte Rosa, or something. If I were a young man I should amuse myself in that way."

"I don't set an exaggerated value on my life, but when I do make up my mind to throw it away, I think I'll do the thing more comfortably," replied Edgar Turchill. "Don't trouble yourself to suggest employment for me. I'm not complaining of my life. There's a good deal of loafing in it, but I rather like loafing, especially when I can loaf in pleasant company. Where are you going, and may I go with you?"

"I am going on a duty visit to Aunt Rhoda and my new uncle. Isn't it rather dreadful to have an uncle thrust upon one in that way?"

"Well," returned Edgar deliberately, "I must say if I had the choosing of my relations I should leave out the rector. But you needn't mind him. Practically he's no more to you than he was before he married your aunt."

"I don't know," said Daphne doubtfully. "He may take liberties. He was always a lecturing old thing, and he'll lecture ever so much more now that he's a relation."

"But you needn't stand his lecturing. Just tell him quietly that you don't hold with clerical interference in the affairs of the laity."

"He got me ready for my confirmation, and that gave him a kind of hold over me," said Daphne. "You see, he found out the depth of my ignorance."

"I'll wager he'd be ploughed in a divinity examination to-morrow," said Edgar. "These old heathens of village parsons got their degrees in a day when the dons were a set of sleepy-headed old duffers like themselves. But don't let's talk about him. What is Madoline going to do in Warwick?"

"She and papa are going to make some calls in the neighbourhood, and I believe she has a little shopping to do."

"Why didn't you go with them?"

"Papa does not like to have three people in the barouche. Besides, I had promised to call on my aunt. She talked to me quite awfully last night about my want of proper feeling in never having visited her in her new house."

"Why didn't you wait till she asked you

to dinner? They give capital dinners at the Rectory; but their feeds are few and far between. I don't want to say anything rude about your aunt, but she strikes me as a lady who has too keen an appreciation of the value of money to fritter it away upon other people."

"Why don't you say at once that she's horribly stingy?" said the outspoken Daphne. "I don't think she ever spent sixpence, except upon her own clothes, all the time she lived in my father's house, and I know she was always getting gowns and bonnets out of Madoline. I've seen her do it. But please don't let's talk of her any more. It's rather worse than talking of him. I shall have to kiss her, and call her dear aunt, presently, and I shall detest myself for being such a hypocrite."

They had gone out by the lodge-gate by this time, the lodge with its thatched roof, and dormer window, like a big eye looking out under a shaggy pent-house eyebrow; the lodge by which there grew one of those tall deodaras which were the chief glory of the grounds at South Hill. They crossed the high road, and entered the meadow-path which led towards Arden Rectory; and the setter finding himself at large in a field, frisked about a little, as if with a faint suspicion of partridges.

"Oh, by-the-bye," began Daphne, in quite a new tone, "now that we are alone, I want you to tell me all about Lina's engagement. Is he nice?"

Edgar Turchill's face clouded over so darkly that the look seemed a sufficient answer to her question.

"Oh, I see," she said. "You don't like him."

"I can't say that. He's an old acquaintance—a friend—a kind of family connection even, for his mother's mother was a Turchill. But, to be candid, I don't like the engagement."

"Why not, unless you know something against him?"

"I know nothing against him. He is a gentleman. He is ten times cleverer than I, ten times richer, a great deal handsomer—my superior in every way. I should be a mean cad if I couldn't acknowledge as much as that. But——"

"You think Lina ought not to have accepted him."

"I think the match in every way suitable, natural, inevitable. How could he help falling in love with her? Why should she refuse him?"

"You are talking in riddles," said Daphne. "You say it is a suitable match, and a minute ago you said you did not like the engagement."

"I say so still. Can't you imagine a reason for my feeling?"

Daphne contemplated him thoughtfully for a few moments as they walked on. His frank English face looked graver than she ever remembered to have seen it—grave to mournfulness.

"I am very sorry," she faltered. "I see. You were fond of her yourself. I am desperately sorry. I should have liked you ever so much better for a brother."

"Don't say that till you have seen Gerald. He has wonderful powers of fascination. He paints and poetises, and all that kind of thing, don't you know; the sort of thing that pleases women. He can't ride a little bit—no seat—no hands."

"How dreadful!" cried Daphne, aghast. "Does he tumble off?"

"I don't mean that. He can stick in his saddle somehow; and he hunts when he's at home in the season; but he can't ride."

"Oh," said Daphne, as if she were trying to understand this distinction.

"Yes, Daphne. I don't mind your knowing it—now it's all over and done with," pursued Edgar, glad to pour his griefs into a friendly ear. "You're my old playfellow—almost like a little sister—and I don't think you'll laugh at me, will you, dear?"

"Laugh at you!" cried Daphne. "If I do may I never be able to smile again."

"I asked your sister to marry me. I had gone on loving her for I don't know how long, before I could pluck up courage to ask the question. I was so afraid of being refused. And I knew if she would only say Yes, that my mother would be the proudest woman in the county, for she positively adores Madoline. And I knew Lina liked Hawksyard; and that was encouraging. So one day, about four years ago, I got desperate, and asked the plain question in a plain way. Heaven knows how much of my happiness hung on the answer; but I couldn't have screwed any poetry out of myself to save my life. I could only tell her the honest truth—that I loved her as well as man ever loved woman."

"Well?" asked Daphne.

"It was no use. She said No: so kindly, so sweetly, so affectionately—for she really likes me, you know, in a sisterly way—that she made me cry like a child. Yes, Daphne, I made a miserable ass of myself. She must have despised such unmanly weakness.

And then in a few minutes it was all over. All my hopes were extinguished, like a candle blown out by the wind, and all my future life was dark. And I had to go back and tell the poor mother that the daughter she wanted was never to come to Hawksyard."

"I am so sorry for you," faltered Daphne.

"Thank you, dear. I knew you would be sympathetic. The blow was a crusher, I assure you. I went away for a few months deer-stalking in the Highlands, but lying on a mountain side in a grey mist for hours on end, not daring to move an eyelash, gives a fellow too much time for thought. I was always thinking of Madoline, and my thoughts were just two hundred and fifty miles due south of the stag when he came across, so I generally shot wild, and felt myself altogether a failure. Then I tried a month in Normandy and Brittany with a knapsack, thinking I might walk down my trouble. But I found that tramping from one badly-drained town to another badly-drained town—all infected with garlic—and looking at churches I didn't particularly want to see, was a sham kind of consolation for a very real disappointment; so I made up my mind to come back to Hawksyard and live it down. And I have lived it down," concluded Edgar exultantly.

"You don't care for Madoline any longer?"

"Not care for her! I shall worship her as long as I have breath in my body. But I have resigned myself to the idea that somebody else is going to marry her—that the most I can ever be to her is a good, useful, humdrum kind of friend, who will be godfather to one of her boys by-and-by; ready to ride helter-skelter for the doctor if any of her children shows symptoms of measles or whooping-cough; glad to take dummy of an evening when she and her husband want to play whist; or to entertain the boys at Hawksyard for their summer holidays while she and he are enjoying a tête-à-tête ramble in the Engadine. That is the sort of man I shall be."

"How good you are!" said Daphne, slipping her hand through his arm with an affectionate impulse.

"Ah, my little Daphne, it will be your turn to fall in love some of these days; put it off as long as you can, dear, for there's more pain than pleasure in it at best." Daphne gave an involuntary sigh. "And then I hope you'll confide in me just as freely as I have confided in you. I may be useful as an adviser, you know, having had my own troubles."

"You could only advise me to be patient, and give up all hope," said Daphne, drawing her hand from his arm. "What would be the good of such advice? But I shall never trouble you. I am not going to fall in love—ever."

She gave the last word an almost angry emphasis.

"Poor little Daphne, as if you could know anything about it," exclaimed Edgar, smiling incredulously at her. "That kind of thing comes upon one unawares. You talk as if you could choose whether you would love or not—like Hercules between his two roads, deliberating whether he should go to the right or the left. Ah, my dear, when we come to that stage of our journey there is but one road for us: and whether it lead to the Garden of Eden or the Slough of Despond, we must travel over it."

"You are getting poetical," exclaimed Daphne scornfully; "I didn't know that was in your line. But please tell me about Gerald. I have never seen him, you know. He was always at Oxford, or roaming about the world somewhere, when I was at home for the holidays. I have been at home so little, you see," she interjected with a piteous air. "I used to hear a great deal about a very wonderful personage, enormously rich, fabulously clever, and accomplished and handsome; and I grew rather to hate him, as one is apt to hate such perfection; and then one day I got a letter from Lina—a letter brimming over with happiness—to say that she and this demigod were engaged to be married, but it was to be a long engagement, because the other demigod—my father—wished for delay. So you see I know very little about my future brother."

"You are sure to like him," said Edgar with a somewhat regretful air. "He has all the qualities which please women. Another man might be as handsome, or even handsomer, yet not half so sure of winning a woman's love. There is something languid, lackadaisical—poetical, I suppose Madoline would call it—in his appearance and manner which women admire."

"I hope he is not effeminate," exclaimed Daphne. "I hate a womanish man."

"No; I don't think anyone could call him effeminate; but he is dreamy, bookish, fond of lolling about under trees, smoking cigarettes and reading verses."

"I'm certain I shall detest him," said Daphne with conviction, "and it will be very dreadful, for I must pretend to like

him for Lina's sake. You must stand by me, Edgar, when he is at the Hill. You and I can chum together, and leave the lovers to spoon by themselves. Oh, by-the-bye, of course you haven't lived on the Avon all your life without being able to row a boat?"

"No; I can row pretty well."

"Then you must teach me, please. I am going to have a boat, my very own. It is being built for me. You'll teach me to row, won't you, Edgar?" she asked with a pleading smile.

"I shall be delighted."

"Thanks tremendously. That will be ever so much better than learning of Bink."

"Indeed! And who is Bink?" asked Edgar, somewhat dashed.

"One of the under gardeners. Such an honest creature, and devoted to me."

"I see; and your first idea was to have been taught by Bink?"

"If there had been no one else," she admitted apologetically. "You see, having ordered a boat, it is essential that I should learn to row."

"Naturally."

They had arrived at the last field by this time. The village lay before them in the sunlight: an old grey church in an old churchyard on the edge of the river, a cluster of half-timbered cottages, with walls of wattle and dab, a homestead dwarfed by rick-yard and barns, and finally the vicarage, a low many-gabled house, half-timbered, like the cottages, a regular sixteenth-century house, with clustered chimneys of massive ruddy-brown brickwork, finished by a stone coping, in which the martens had built from time immemorial.

"I can't tell you how glad I am to have you with me," said Daphne as they came near the stile. "It will take the edge off my visit."

"Oh, but I did not mean to go in with you. I only walked with you for the pleasure of being your escort."

"Nonsense; you are going in, and you are going to stay till I go back, and you are going back with me to dinner. I'm sure you must owe Aunt Rhoda a call. Just consider now if you don't."

Edgar, who had a guilty memory of being a guest at one of the rector's rare but admirable dinners, just five weeks ago, blushed as he admitted his indebtedness.

"I certainly haven't called since I dined there," he said, "but the fact is, I don't get on very fast with your aunt, although I've known her so long."

"Of course not. I never knew anyone who could get on with her, except Lina, and she's an angel."

They came to the stile, which was what the country people call a tumble-down stile, all the timbers of the gate sliding down with a clatter when a handle was moved, and leaving space for the pedestrian to step over. The Rectory gate stood before them, a low wide gate, standing open to admit the entrance of a carriage. The garden was lovely, even before the season of bedding-out plants and carpet horticulture. For the last twenty years the rector had annually imported a choice selection of Dutch bulbs, whereby his flower-beds and borders on this May afternoon were a blaze of colour—tulip, hyacinth, ranunculus, polyanthus—each and every flower that blooms in the sweet youth of the year: and as a background for the level lawn with its many flower-beds, there was a belt of such timber and an inner circle of such shrubs as are only to be found in a garden that has been cultivated and improved for a century or so. Copper beeches, Spanish chestnuts, curious specimens of the oak tribe, the feathery foliage of acacia and mountain-ash, the pink bloom of the wild plum, and the snowy clusters of the American crab, deodara, cypress, yew, and in the foreground arbutus and seringa, lilac, laburnum, guelder rose, with all the family of laurel, laurustinus, and bay; a shrubbery so exquisitely kept, that not a blighted branch or withered leaf was to be seen in the spacious circle which fenced and protected that smiling lawn from all the outer world.

The house was, in its way, as perfect as the garden. There were many rooms, but none large or lofty. The Rectory had all the shortcomings and all the fascinations of an old house: wide hearths and dog-stoves, high mantel-pieces, deep recessed casements, diamond panes, leaden lattices, massive roughly-hewn beams supporting the ceilings, a wide shallow staircase, rooms opening one out of another, irregular levels, dark oak floors, a little stained glass here and there—real old glass, of rich dark red, or sombre green, or deep dull topaz.

The house was delightfully furnished, though Mr. Ferrers had never taken any trouble about it. Many a collector, worn out before his time by the fever and anxiety of long summer afternoons at Christie's, would have envied Marmaduke Ferrers the treasures which had fallen to him without the trouble of collecting. Residuary

legatee to all his aunts and uncles, he had taken to himself the things that were worth having among their goods and chattels, and had sold all the rubbish.

The aunts and uncles had been old-fashioned non-locomotive people, hoarding up and garnering the furniture of past generations. Thus had the rector acquired Chippendale chairs and tables, old Dutch tulip-wood cabinets and bureaux, Louis Quinze commodes, Elizabethan clocks, Derby and Worcester, Bow, Bristol, Leeds, and Swansea crockery, with a sprinkling of those dubious jugs and bowls that are generally fathered on Lowestoft. Past generations had amassed and hoarded in order that the rector might be rich in art treasures without ever putting his hand in his pocket. Furniture that had cost a few pounds when it was bought was now worth hundreds, and the rector had it all for nothing, just because he came of a selfish celibate race.

The Chippendale furniture, the Dutch marqueterie work, old china, and old plate had all been in Miss Lawford's mind when she took the rector in hand and brought him to see her fitness for his wife.

True that her home at South Hill was as elegant, and in all things as desirable: but there was a wide difference between living under the roof of her brother, more or less on sufferance, and being mistress of her own house. Thus the humbler charms of the Rectory impressed her more than the dignity of the Hill. Sir Vernon Lawford was not a pleasant man to whom to be beholden. His daughters were now grown up. Madoline was sovereign mistress of the house which must one day be her own: and Rhoda Lawford felt that to stay at the Hill would be to sink to the humdrum position of a maiden aunt, for whom nobody cared very much.

Mrs. Ferrers was sitting in a Japanese chair on the lawn, in front of the drawing-room windows, nursing a black and white Japanese pug, and rather yearning for some one from the outer world, even in that earthly paradise where the guelder roses were all in bloom and the air was heavy with the odour of hawthorn-blossom.

"At last!" she exclaimed, as Daphne and her companion made their timorous advance across the velvet turf, mown twice a week in the growing season. "You too, Mr. Turchill; I thought you were never coming to see me."

"After that delightful evening with the Mowbrays and the people from Liddington!

It was too ungrateful of me," said Edgar. "If you call me Mr. Turchill I shall think I am never to be forgiven."

"Well, then, it shall be Edgar, as it was in the old days," said Mrs. Ferrers, with a faint suspicion of sentiment.

There had been a time when it had seemed to her not altogether impossible that she should become Mrs. Turchill. Hawksyard Grange was such a delicious old place; and Edgar was her junior by only fourteen years.

"I don't want you to make ceremonious calls just because you happen to have dined here, but I want you to drop in often because you like us. I want you to bring me breathings of the outside world. A clergyman's life in a country parish is so narrow. I feel hourly becoming a vegetable."

Mrs. Ferrers looked complacently down at her tea-gown of soft creamy Indian silk, copiously trimmed with softer Breton lace, and felt that at least she was a very well-dressed vegetable. Knots of palest blue satin nestled here and there among the lace; a cluster of hot-house roses—large velvety yellow roses—reposed on Mrs. Ferrers's shoulder, and agreeably contrasted with her dark, smoothly-banded hair. She prided herself on the classic form of her small head, and the classic simplicity of her coiffure.

"I think we all belong, more or less, to the vegetable tribe about here," said Mr. Turchill. "There is something sleepy in the very air of our pastoral valleys. I sometimes long to get away to the stone-wall country yonder, on the Cotswolds, to breathe a freer, more wakeful air."

"I can't say that I languish for the Cotswolds," replied Mrs. Ferrers, "but I should very much like a fortnight in Mayfair. Do you know if your father and Madoline are going to London this season, Daphne?"

"I think not. Papa fancies himself not quite well enough for the fatigue of London, and Lina does not care about going."

It had been Sir Vernon's habit to take a furnished house at the West End for some part of May and June, in order to see all the picture-galleries, and hear all the operas that were worth being heard, and to do a little visiting among his very select circle of acquaintance. He was not a man who made new acquaintances if he could help it, or who went to people because they lived in big houses and gave big dinners. He was exclusive to a fault, detested crowds, and had a rooted conviction

that every new man was a swindler and destined to end his career in ignominious bankruptcy. It had gone hard with him to consent to his daughter's engagement with a man who on the father's side was a parvenu; but he had consoled himself as best he might with the idea of Lady Geraldine's blue blood, and Mr. Goring's very substantial fortune.

"And so you are no longer a school-girl, Daphne, and have come home for good," said Mrs. Ferrers, dropping her elegant society manner and putting on a sententious air, which Daphne knew too well. "I hope you are going to try to improve yourself—for what girls learn at school is a mere smattering—and that you are aware how much room there is for improvement—in your carriage, for instance."

"I haven't any carriage, aunt, but papa is going to let me keep a boat," said Daphne, who had been absently watching the little yellow butterflies skimming above the flame-coloured tulips.

"My dear, I am talking of your deportment. You are sitting most awkwardly at this moment, one shoulder at least three inches higher than the other."

"Don't worry about it, aunt," said Daphne indifferently; "perhaps it's a natural deformity."

"I hope not. I think it rests with yourself to become a very decent figure," replied Mrs. Ferrers, straightening her own slim waist. "Here comes your uncle, returning from his round of duty in time to enjoy his afternoon tea."

The rector drove up to the gate in a low park phaeton, drawn by a sleek bay cob; a cob too well fed and lazy to think of running away, but a little apt to become what the groom called "a bit above himself," and to prance and toss his head in an arrogant manner, or even to shy at a stray rabbit, as if he had never seen such a creature before, and hadn't the least idea what the apparition meant. The rector's round of duty had been a quiet drive through elm-shadowed lanes, and rustic occupation roads, with an occasional pull-up before the door of a cottage, or a farmhouse, where, without alighting, he would enquire in a fat pompous voice after the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of his parishioners, and then shedding on them the light of a benignant smile, or a few solemn words of clerical patronage, he would give the reins a gentle shake and drive off again. This kind of parochial visitation, lasting for about two hours, the

rector performed twice or three times a week, always selecting a fine afternoon. It kept him in the fresh air, gave him an appetite for his dinner, and maintained pleasant relations between the pastor and his flock.

Mr. Ferrers flung the reins to his groom, a man of middle age, in sober dark livery, and got himself ponderously out of his carriage on to the gravel drive. He was a large man, tall and broad, with a high bald head, red-brown eyes of the protuberant order, a florid complexion, pendulous cheeks and chin, and mutton-chop whiskers of a warm chestnut. He was a man whose appearance, even to the stranger, suggested a life devoted to dining; a man to whom dinner was the one abiding reality of life, the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow—a memory, an actuality, a hope. He was the man for whom asparagus and peas are forced into untimely perfection—the man who eats poached salmon in January, and gives a fabulous price for the first of the grouse—the man for whom green geese are roasted in June, and who requires immature turkeys to be fatted for him in October; who can enjoy oysters at fourpence a piece; who thinks ninety shillings a dozen a reasonable price for dry champagne, and would drive thirty miles to secure some of the late Colonel Somebody's famous East India sherry.

Rhoda had married the Reverend Marmaduke with her eyes fully opened to the materialistic side of his character. She knew that if she wanted to live happily with him and to exercise that gentle and imperceptible sway, which vulgar people call hen-pecking, she must make dinner the chief study of her life. So long as she gave full satisfaction upon this point; so long as she could maintain a table, in which the homely English virtue of substantial abundance was combined with the artistic variety of French cooking; so long as she anticipated the rector's fancies, and forestalled the seasons, she would be sure to please. But an hour's forgetfulness of his tastes or prejudices, a single failure, an experimental dish, would shatter for the time being the whole fabric of domestic bliss, and weaken her hold of the matrimonial sceptre. The rector's wife had considered all this before she took upon herself the responsibilities of married life. Supremely indifferent herself to the pleasures of the table, she had to devote one thoughtful hour of every day to the consideration of what her husband would like

to eat, drink, and avoid. She had to project her mind into the future to secure for him novelty of diet. Todd, the house-keeper, had ministered to him for many years, and knew all his tastes: but Mrs. Ferrers wanted to do better than Todd had done, and to prove to the rector that he had acted wisely in committing himself to the dulcet bondage of matrimony. She was a clever woman—not bookish or highly cultured—but skilled in all the small arts and devices of daily life; and so far she had succeeded admirably. The rector, granted the supreme indulgence of all his desires, was his wife's admiring slave. He flattered her, he deferred to her, he praised her, he boasted of her to all his acquaintance as the most perfect thing in wives, just as he boasted of the sleek bay as the paragon of cobs, and his garden as the archetype of gardens.

And now for the first time Daphne had to salute this great man in his new character of an uncle. She went up to him timidly; a graceful, gracious figure in a pale yellow batiste gown, a knot of straw-coloured Marguerites shining on her breast, her lovely liquid eyes darkened by the shadow of her Tuscan hat.

"How do you do—uncle," she said, holding out a slender hand, in a long loose Swedish glove.

The rector started, and stared at her dumbly; whether bewildered by so fair a vision, or taken aback by the unexpected assertion of kinsmanship, only he himself knew.

"Bless my soul!" he cried. "Is this Daphne? Why the child has grown out of all knowledge. How d'ye do, my dear? Very glad to see you. You'll stop to dinner, of course. You and Turchill. How d'ye do, Turchill?"

The rector had a troublesome trick of asking everybody who crossed his threshold in the afternoon to dinner. He had an abiding idea that his friends wanted to be fed; that they would rather dine with him than go home; and that if they refused, their refusal was mere modesty and self-denial, and ought not to be accepted. Vainly had Rhoda lectured her spouse upon this evil habit, vainly had she tried to demonstrate to him that an afternoon visit should be received as such, and need not degenerate into a dinner-party. The rector was incorrigible. Hospitality was his redeeming virtue.

"Thanks awfully," replied Daphne; "but I must go home to dinner. Papa

and Lina expect me. Of course Mr. Turchill can do as he likes."

"Then Turchill will stay," said the rector.

"My dear rector, you are very kind, but I must go home with Daphne. I brought her, don't you see, and I'm bound to take her back. There might be a bull or something."

"Do you think I am afraid of bulls," cried Daphne; "why I love the whole cow tribe. If I saw a bull in one of our meadows, I should walk up to him and make friends."

The rector surveyed the yellow damsel with an unctuous smile.

"It would be dangerous," he said in his fat voice, "if I were the bull."

"Why?"

"I should be tempted to imitate an animal famous in classic story, and swim the Avon with you on my back," replied the rector.

"Duke," said Mrs. Ferrers with her blandest smile, "don't you think you had better rest yourself in your cool study while we take our tea. I'm sure you must be tired after your long drive. These first warm days are so exhausting. I'll bring you your cup of tea."

"Don't trouble yourself, my love," replied the rector; "Daphne can wait upon me. Her legs are younger than yours."

This unflattering comparison, to say nothing of the vulgar allusion to "legs," was too much for Rhoda's carefully educated temper. She gave her Marmaduke a glance of undisguised displeasure.

"I am not so ancient or infirm as to find my duties irksome," she said severely; "I shall certainly bring you your tea."

The rector had a weakness about pretty girls. There was no harm in it. He had lived all his life in an atmosphere of beauty, and no scandal had ever arisen about peeress or peasant. He happened to possess an artistic appreciation of female loveliness, and he took no trouble to disguise the fact. Youth and beauty and freshness were to him as the very wine of life—second only to actual Cliquot, or Roederer, Clos Vougeot, or Marcobrunner. His wife was too well acquainted with this weakness. She had known it years before she had secured Marmaduke for her own; and she had flattered herself that she could cure him of this inclination to philander; but so far the curative process had been a failure.

But Marmaduke, though inclined to folly, was not rebellious. He loved a

gentle doze in the cool shade of his study, where there were old-fashioned easy-chairs of a shape more comfortable than has ever revealed itself to the mind of modern upholsterer. The brief slumber gave him strength to support the fatigue of dressing for dinner, for the Reverend Marmaduke was as careful of the outward man as of the inner, and had never been seen in slovenly attire, or with unshaven visage.

Mrs. Ferrers sank into her chair with a sigh of relief as the rector disappeared through the deep rustic porch. The irreproachable butler, who had grown grey in Mr. Ferrers's service, brought the tea-tray, with its Japanese cups and saucers. Edgar Turchill subsided upon a low rustic stool at Daphne's feet, just where his length of arm would enable him to wait upon the two ladies. They made a pretty domestic group: the westering sun shining upon them, the Japanese pug fawning at their feet, flowers and foliage surrounding them, birds singing, bees humming, cattle lowing in the neighbouring fields.

Edgar looked up admiringly at the bright young face above him: eyes so darkly luminous, a complexion of lilies and roses, that exquisite creamy whiteness which goes with pale auburn hair, that lovely varying bloom which seems a beauty of the mind rather than of the person, so subtly does it indicate every emotion and follow the phases of thought. Yes; the face was full of charm, though it was not the face of his dreams—not the face he had worshipped for years before he presumed to reveal his love for the owner. If a man cannot win the woman he loves it were better surely that he should teach himself to love one who seems more easily attainable. The bright particular star shines afar off in an inaccessible heaven; but lovely humanity is here at his side, smiling on him, ready to be wooed and won.

Edgar's reflections did not go quite so far as this, but he felt that he was spending his afternoon pleasantly, and he looked forward with complacency to the homeward walk through the meadows.

LAND AT RETAIL.

UNDER the heading of *Locked-up Land*,* an attempt has been made to lay before the readers of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND* the actual conditions under which by far the

* *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, New Series, Vol. 24, pp. 539 and 558.

greater part of the land in England is held. It is now proposed to indicate in a rapid manner the remedies suggested by those who have specially studied the subject.

To begin with, it is necessary to have done with the futile methods of permissive registration which the genius of lawyers has interposed as stumbling-blocks in the path of land reform. All that was wanted to make the land laws of England absolutely perfect, held Lord Chancellor Wigsby, was to permit landholders to register their titles if they saw fit. Lord Chancellor Bagleigh thought that permissive laws were apt to be imperative, but that compulsory measures could hardly be resorted to at once. You could hardly make a man expose a weak title, and thus depreciate his own property; and on the other hand, an owner with a clear title did not want you at all. And, we were told, compulsory registration, and, indeed, compulsory laws of any kind, were foreign to the genius of the English people, who loved freedom, and—and the rest of it. To meddle with the sacred rights of landed property and proprietors was—ah!—was like getting between the tree and the bark, between husband and wife, between mother and child, and would never be endured by English people. It was all very well for foreigners with their outlandish ways; but it was un-English; it might do for the Saxons, but not for the Anglo-Saxons, and so forth.

Now it is a plain fact, worthy of being meditated upon, that the Anglo-Saxon, so far as England is concerned, has shown for several years past a distinct tendency towards what is called by its enemies coercive legislation. It has been acknowledged that the gospel of letting all things alone may be pushed too far, at least in an old country riddled with traditions and encumbered by laws and customs which sit on the present age like a suit of plate-armour on a rifle-man. The rubbish of feudalism makes a mound like unto Old Sarum. Its active principle is dead. Whatever use it once had has passed away. The fierce strong life which palpitated on the windy height commanding the old Roman Road has long since died out. The strong hand of the oppressor is dust. Yet the outline of his work remains. The hill-fort of Sarum and the law of strict entail have both disappeared, but a green hill and a mass of fanciful legislation remain to show us what was once law and life in England.

When the first Reform Bill exploded

some of the superstitions of the past, and grassy mounds and stone walls no longer returned members to Parliament, the first blow was given to a rotten fabric. Vested rights were rudely overthrown, and timid elderly gentlemen foretold that only the ballot was required to complete the dissolution of society. The constitution of society, however, has proved very much tougher than the elderly gentlemen imagined, and the chaos predicted as the consequence of the removal of landmarks has not yet set in. Free-trade has doubled the commerce of this country by sweeping away a monopoly, which favoured only landholders by raising the rents without benefiting the actual cultivator. Thus far the spirit of modern legislation had been in the direction of removing the restrictions imposed on himself by the meddling legislator of the past. But that which may be called a new departure in law-making was taken when the old superstition against interference between husband and wife was pushed aside by the Married Woman's Property Act, and the relations of parent and child were set at naught by compulsory education. Just such an outcry was made by clergymen and lawyers against compulsory education as is now made against the abolition of the laws of settlement. The sacred institution of the family would be mined. Parents and children would be set against one another, just as Sydney Smith said the ballot would do in his ridiculous essay on that subject, now only interesting as showing how very much "Peter Pitt" was the rhetorical decorator of prejudice, and how far he was behind Grote and other real thinkers of his time. Revolutionary theories as to the devolution of the care of infants upon the State would, it was said, be justified by any such monstrous introduction as State-education. Yet all this has been done, and the country goes on better than before. The State has violated the sanctity of the family hearth. It has interposed its authority between mother and child. It has prescribed to a lesson and to an hour what a child of given age should know, and how many hours it may or may not work. The effect of this un-English way of going about things has been, in nine years, to double the teaching machinery of the country, and to treble its effective power. Against a million and a half scholars nine years ago, more than four millions now receive daily instruction. It is of no use to oppose sentimental considerations to facts of this kind, which only

require to be known to carry conviction with them.

The holiness of the domestic hearth having been invaded with success, it is but a small matter to interfere with the transfer of property. If it has been decided irrevocably that the parent is not always the best guardian for the child, it can hardly excite amazement that the ancient law or custom of settlement should be overturned. Lady Fitzgorgon and old Lord Stoneleigh may cry out as they please, but the destruction of the complicated machinery for tying up property will most assuredly be effected within a very few years. The most case-hardened lawyers, who would even now hold the State interference between parent and child as wholly unwarrantable, admit that land is the property of the State, in which no other person can do more than hold an estate—fee simple at the best. On all hands, even by the great Joshua Williams himself, the interest of the State in land is admitted to be superior to that of any other person. Fee simple, or “freehold,” as it is most commonly called, signifies that no person intervenes between the freeholder and the State. He is like the old feudal tenant-in-chief, who held of the king alone, without owing service or allegiance to any vavasour or intermediate vassal of the prime suzerain. But many lands in England are what is called copyhold; an obsolete tenure which had better be swept away at once than allowed to wear itself out as it is now doing by a tardy and tortoiselike process. All authorities, from that legal luminary, Joshua Williams, to mere historians like Mr. Froude, and statesmen like Lord Sherbrooke, agree that the land itself belongs theoretically to the nation, the State, the people, or is “a kind of property in which the public must from its very nature have a kind of dormant joint interest with the proprietor.” This “dormant interest” is not often aroused. For instance, a large proprietor, from poverty, embarrassment, litigation, or natural perversity, may allow his estate to remain untilled, to become overrun with brambles and sow-thistles, and he may escape that interference which the State has a right to exercise. He has no right “to do as he likes with his own” according to the view of that foolish old Duke of Newcastle, whose ruined castle has recently been turned into the Nottingham Museum. He is only guaranteed by the State the enjoyment of his fee-simple so long as he does not exercise his privilege in a manner prejudicial to public policy. That

all this theory is based upon a sound substratum of practice is not disproved because the State does not interfere with a landowner who chooses to depopulate his property in order to turn it into a deer-forest, or who lets his farms go to wrack and ruin, rather than let them except under certain restrictions as to the sale of straw and the rotations of crops. He is allowed to do all this because State interference in such cases would be a graver evil than the waste of his estate, and a curtailment of liberty excites greater jealousy than any individual carelessness or perversity. But the instant the landowner proceeds to administer his property in such fashion as to cause loss or annoyance to his neighbours, the principle that the common good overrides the individual rights of proprietors is universally recognised.

But theories of ownership in land, and abstract speculations as to the rights which it confers, are by no means to the taste of Englishmen, and may safely be left to learned lawyers and advanced philosophers. It is far more important, at the present juncture, to consider the probable effect of free trade in land, brought about by the abolition of the present law of settlement and entail, and the cheapening of the transfer of real property. The opponents of change have, apart from sentimental considerations for old families, ancestral roof-trees, family vaults, and the rest of it, two stock arguments, each vigorous in its way. It is perhaps a little unfortunate that these arguments contradict each other completely, but they are none the less entitled to a fair hearing.

Let us first hear T. Plantagenet Belvoir Burkitt, J.P. Our friend Burkitt is the son of a successful man of business, who, while young and poor, married Plantagenet's mother, who was a laundrymaid. Plantagenet was originally christened Thomas, but the Thomas was dropped when old Burkitt, a few years after his first wife's death, married a gentlewoman of a decayed county family, and retired from the firm of Burkitt and Hareleigh, of the coolie trade. So decayed was the family of the second Mrs. Burkitt that her husband was forthwith charged with the maintenance of her brothers and sisters, who ate and drank at his expense, borrowed his money, and despised him; but, nevertheless, brought him into county society, and, backed by his money, got him into Parliament. Young Burkitt has studied the law,

and looks forward to a parliamentary career himself.

"Better distribution of property?" says Burkitt. "The facilitation of the purchase of real property will have exactly the opposite effect. There will be fewer owners of property than ever. In twenty years, or whatever limit you gentlemen are pleased to assign to the present state of things, all the land would be in the hands of a few great capitalists who would buy right and left for political reasons. Everybody who was hard up would be sold up, and you would abolish the owners who care about their land and their people, in favour of those who would not care a brass farthing for either one or the other." Burkitt junior says this with as grand an air as if his father's property had belonged to the Burkitts since the Conquest, instead of being a recent purchase from the utterly done-up Sangazures; and is much applauded by the young men who are doing their best to prevent old Burkitt's Lafitte, vintage of 1858, from being kept too long.

The opinion of Lord Bunnymore, whose great estate of Coneylands lies on the further side of the county, is directly opposed to that of Mr. Burkitt, whom he envies for his solvency and despises for his birth. For Lord Bunnymore's people are of a very old family, said to have descended from the De Warrennes of mediæval fame. The pedigree is, however, not quite so clear as might be wished, but the missing link has been admirably restored. There was only a gap of a couple of hundred years between the last assumed descendants of the De Warrennes and the first Sir John Rabbits or Rarebitts, who, going at an early age to London from the principality of Wales, became Lord Mayor, married an heiress of lands in the Ward of Portsoken, and subsequently bought from the Parliament the Gravelshire property of sundry malignants. So Lord Bunnymore is of very good family, indeed, and when he married Lady Susan Dedham, Lord Mortmain's eldest daughter, everybody said what a good match it was for her. Lord Bunnymore makes merry at the idea of abolishing settlement and entail. "By Jove!" he exclaims; "what a good thing it would be for Percy Nightshade, and Marmy Foxglove, and Totterdown, poor old devil! Why, when Totterdown married his daughter to that scoundrel Buffle, we all laughed over the wedding-favours. We knew Gunter would stand him for the wedding-breakfast; but where did he

get the ready money from to buy the white ribbons? Not in Mayford, for certain, for they had ruined all the tradespeople there, and I don't believe Howell and James or Lewis and Allenby would have let them have a yard of tape. Would not old Totterdown like a general selling up if he could only get a monkey for himself out of the scramble? But there is no such luck for him. Not yet, sir. Not in my time, I hope, will the land be cut up and divided among a lot of poor wretches—all starving together. Peasant proprietors, indeed! Pretty fellows to own anything who can't earn a living without stealing my game. Confound them. They live on me, sir. And you talk of abolishing the game laws! I know one 'industrial population,' as you call it, that won't thank you. There would be an army of drunken Othellos at the De Warrenne Arms, who would find their occupation gone. No, sir; property on your own showing requires capital to work it, and where will your peasant proprietors be in a few years? All starving together, and wishing you five fathoms under the Rialto."

To dispose of the Burkitt theory first, it is inevitable that the desire to possess land of good quality in manageable parcels is so great that it would pay better to sell encumbered estates to small proprietors than to great capitalists, and that the latter would in any case take care to get their money back by building or otherwise improving and developing the property. Furthermore it may be urged that English arable land is rapidly passing from the farm into the market-garden stage on one hand, and falling back to pasture land on the other. What, however, is most important is that the land, instead of remaining for a great part in the hands of impecunious owners, overwhelmed by fixed charges upon property of decreasing value, would pass to those capable of doing justice to it either by wholesale or retail.

The question of peasant proprietors—that is to say, of persons farming from five to fifty acres—has been far too hastily dismissed. It is roundly asserted that small ownership has proved a failure in France. This, however, may very fairly be doubted. The payment of the enormous war-tax without any apparent diminution of national prosperity has caused many thinking people to doubt whether France is not substantially a richer country than England. It is true that the number of very rich people—say

of those enjoying a larger income than ten thousand pounds a year—is very small in France as compared with England. But is this a subject for regret? Familiar knowledge of France and its inhabitants is apt to produce the contrary impression, that the wide distribution of wealth is at least as beneficial to a country as its accumulation in a few hands. Be this as it may, however, it would be ridiculous to contend that the average English agricultural labourer is as well off as the French peasant proprietor.

It is also easy to prove that the determination of husbandry by the subdivision of the land has been vastly overrated. Very few parts of England are better cultivated than the Isle of Axholme, which is almost entirely divided into small farms. The life of the small proprietors of Axholme has been called a hard one; but that is because little farmers are compared with large ones, which is like comparing a costermonger with a fruiterer. The true comparison is between a peasant proprietor and a farm labourer, a costermonger and a basket-woman—a small proprietor or capitalist, in short, and a mere worker without other capital than thews and sinews.

A more striking proof at once of the importance of free-trade in land, and of the possibility of working small farms at a profit, is provided by the Channel Islands. In Jersey there are many farms of ten acres farmed successfully, and an ample reply is furnished to the fashionable statement that now that steam is largely employed in agricultural work the small farmer will be at a greater disadvantage than heretofore. The difficulty is easily got over by a number of small proprietors arranging together among themselves, and hiring the machinery with its attendant engineer and stoker by turns. As an instance of the care with which all farming and dairy operations are performed may be cited the tethering of cattle. As a rule all the pretty little Alderney cows, as they are called, are tethered instead of being allowed to roam at large. A rope fastened round the horns and secured by an iron spike driven into the ground allows the cow to eat down the grass within a ten feet radius, after which she is removed to another spot. Not only is this practice a saving one as regards pasturage, but the cow is said to do better than when permitted to ramble about at will. The crops of vegetables grown in Jersey are magnificent.

Mr. Arthur Arnold speaks of five and a half tons of new potatoes, and of as much as twenty-two and a half tons of parsnips per acre. These extraordinary results are ascribed, not unnaturally, by Mr. Arnold to the keenness of the owner's eye. The farmer is working his own land for his own profit. In the same way the produce of the small farms of Belgium is infinitely heavier per acre than that of the large farms of La Hesbaie and Le Condroz.

A recent visit to Ireland has convinced Mr. J. H. Tuke that small farms of twenty or thirty acres can be successfully worked in Donegal. He gives names, places, size of farms, and conditions of purchase in the current number of the Nineteenth Century. The numerous small holdings concerning which he gives very interesting particulars, were mostly glebe-land farms recently sold to small proprietors by the Church Commissioners. While at Londonderry he visited the glebe-lands near Urney, three miles south of Strabane. The holdings vary from five to fifty acres, and were purchased from the Irish Temporalities Commission in 1875. The purchase money was high for Ireland—from twenty-three to twenty-five years' purchase on the rental—especially when the cost of tenant right is added. Experience on these small farms goes to prove that in Ireland it is not possible to make a living out of a six or ten acre farm, as it is in Jersey; but the difference of the value of land must be considered; for one acre in Jersey will buy twenty in Donegal. The holders of the twenty or thirty acre farms in the last-named county have done very well, and many of them have very little more money to pay before their farms are absolutely their own, "free of the landlords for ever," as they repeat with intense glee.

In Scotland, again, the general cry for large farms is met during these hard times with some curious rebutting evidence furnished to the writer by one of the largest landholders in Scotland. This nobleman, who attends most carefully to the management of his estate, has a rent-roll exceeding sixty thousand pounds a year, and has so many small farmers on his estate that the average rental of his farms is something under fifteen pounds per annum. He tells me that his tenants have come up bravely during the hard times and not asked for any remission whatever. It is true that their green crops are not devoured by ground game, for his father gave them permission to slay

hares and rabbits several years ago, and also that the land, being in Banffshire, Morayshire, and Fifeshire, is of fair quality.

It is no part of my present purpose to uphold a general system of small farming against the conduct of that business on a larger scale. All I have sought rather to indicate than to demonstrate is that the insane terror about the land being "cut up" or "parcelled out among paupers," and therefore imperfectly cultivated, is purely visionary. Wherever the land should become divided into small holdings the letting of steam machinery would become a business of itself, and it is not certain that a farmer of twenty acres would be more dependent in that respect than one of two or three hundred, as the latter cannot afford to keep up a plant of agricultural machinery and a staff of engineers, as the matter stands, without letting them to his neighbours. It is probable that if the transfer of land were put on a rational footing there would be many more small farmers than at present, especially as market-garden produce appears likely to take the place of wheat; but it is not the sub-division of holdings that is now contended for, but the emancipation of the land from the trammels which have confined it and crippled its productive power so long.

A complete scheme for freeing the land was prepared several years ago at the request of the chairman of the Cobden Club by Mr. Arthur Arnold. As it has not since been superseded by any better plan I append it.

First,—The devolution of real property in cases of intestacy in the same manner which the law directs in regard to personal property.

Second,—The abolition of copyhold and customary tenures.

Third,—The establishment of a Landed Estates Court, for the disposal of encumbered settled property.

Fourth,—A completion of the Ordnance Survey of the United Kingdom upon a sufficient scale.

Fifth,—A system of registration of title, which shall be compulsory upon the sale of property, the fees upon registration—sufficient at least to defray all official expenses—being a percentage on the purchase-money; the same percentage for all sums. A certificate of title would be given free of all costs in respect of any freehold lands, of which the reputed

owner could prove undisturbed possession for thirty years. Any title could be registered in the Land Registry Office upon evidence of title for thirty years; the fees being the same as in case of sale, when registration would be compulsory.

Sixth,—That, preserving intact the power of owners of land to bequeath it undivided or in shares, no gift, or bequest or settlement of life estate in land, nor any trust establishing such an estate, should hereafter be lawful; the exceptions being in the case of trusts for the widow or the infant children (until they attain majority) of the testator, or for the benefit of a posthumous child.

It will be observed that the first and sixth clauses involve the complete abolition of the law of primogeniture, settlement, and entail. The scheme aims, in fact, with some exceptions, at the destruction of the mischievous power of giving "life estates," as it is called, which is simply another name for keeping the owner of property in tutelage. Except for the benefit of widows and infant children the whole system of trusts and settlements has become a nuisance. Like the old law of strict entail which it succeeded, it is merely a device for flattering the folly and vanity of man, who loves to fancy that when his hand is dead and cold his signature is yet a thing of power to fetter the living. How absolutely ridiculous this desire may become has been shown in the Thellusson case, and again to-day in the Havelock-Allan case. Of all vanities perhaps that expressed in the two wills referred to is the most childish, and that for which the least sympathy can be felt. Happily the time is approaching when this rubbish of feudalism, utterly foreign to the principle of the Roman law, will assuredly be swept away.

MY LITTLE TOUR IN WALES.

PART III.

WHY should a table-d'hôte, which, as I have always understood, is, on the other side of the silver streak, a lively institution enough, become, on this, so very grim and solemn a function? We sit down this evening five-and-twenty strong, and surely we can't all be suffering from the effects of such a catastrophe as that of this morning, which has added at least an additional shovel and tongs to the habitual poker in Adolphus's constitution, and her share in which Woffles is even now expiating—much to her own delight—by peremptory

banishment to the upper region, where I have just left her in the midst of an uproarious game of romps with a good-natured chambermaid. But surely all the chaperons of the party cannot be brooding in speechless dignity over the "most unfortunate" misfortunes of their chaperonees, or all the chaperonees be resenting in dignified speechlessness the disapproval of their chaperons. That the soup—not bad soup, by the way, if it were only a little warmer—should appear and disappear in solemn silence is, of course, only in accordance with the best traditions of the British dinner-table of whatever kind, even if it be not dictated, as it doubtless is, by the Great Ananké, or the Eternal Fitness of Things. But by the time we get to the scarlet bears and the mutton a good score people who have been all day engaged in exploring the beauties of about a quarter that number of square miles of scenery might have found common ground for some sort of remark. But three-fourths of us at least have not yet opened our mouths for any but exclusively commissariat purposes. The young couple on the opposite side—who do not at all require ticketing as bride and bridegroom—keep up a brisk conversation certainly between themselves, but it is of the most strictly private description. A highly benevolent-looking old gentleman is discussing with his rather pinched and watery wife what, from the fragments of the discourse which now and then reach me in the benevolent-looking old gentleman's rich and mellifluous tones, appears to be some fresh delinquency on the part of a certain Harry, whose general iniquities draw forth from the benevolent-looking old gentleman various comments of a by no means highly benevolent sound. And two young gentlemen in bicycle costume from Wolver'ampton are narrating to each other, with much unction, sundry personal adventures. But with these exceptions, and an occasional whispered request for a tankard of bitter or a half-bottle of Number Seventeen, our forks alone—save in the case of one worthy citizen whose views as to peas are of a primitive nature—have grounds for suspecting that we have any mouths at all. Once a solemn gentleman with a "pinch-nose" and a high, a very high, forehead, over which a score or so of lonely hairs are carefully combed from either side, so far thaws as to enquire of another high-foreheaded gentleman in an eye-glass on the other side of the table which he con-

siders the best route for the mining district of South Wales. But the high-foreheaded gentleman with the eye-glass is not swift of speech, and one of the young bicyclers from Wolver'ampton strikes rashly in with a friendly "Shrewsbury and 'Ereford, 8.45. Take y' about 'arf-a-dozen hours." Whereon the two high-foreheaded ones shut up as with a spring into a sterner silence than before, If I did not hate the very name of that impertinent young engineer—and the mere mention by the watery lady, as a diversion from the sore subject of Harry's misdeeds, of a desire to visit the famous Llangollen manufactory to replenish her stock of flannels, has already turned me crimson all over—I could really almost wish—— But Mr. Flannels is no doubt half-way to London by this time. Not at all the young man, I should think, to linger a second day in so quiet a place as Llangollen,

We get up in a better humour next morning. Indeed, anyone who—let him wake up in the worst humour in the world—could possibly maintain it till breakfast-time in face of such a view as I have from my window, with the swollen Dee rushing and roaring below and the mist-wreaths floating up from the huge bare cliffs of Eglwyseg, and the ruin-crowned summit of Dinas Bran, and the golden sun-rays stealing up the valley and flooding leaf, and bough, and rock, and river, and forest with a glory of diamonds and gold, must have a better memory than I have, or poor Adolphus either. As for Dolly, he is quite radiant this morning, and actually carries me off for a half-mile walk to a wonderful "point of view" at the foot of the Barber's Hill, where, as our local guide informs us, "nearly all parties who proceed in this direction are overwhelmed with delight," and where, though we happily escape that ultimate catastrophe, we certainly enjoy as exquisite a view of the lovely valley of the Dee as one may well hope to get for an appetiser before breakfast. Still, even this, with the addition of the sweet mountain air, which even here comes sweeping softly down upon us from the top of the lofty Berwyn—three syllables, if you please—hardly seems to me fully to account for my severe brother-in-law's extreme radiancy this morning. And I am right. As we near the hotel on our return, who should come to meet us but Emma, with a demurely guilty air, as if she had been stealing the cream and I was the dairy-maid. And close behind her come Woffles and—Nurse Sanderson.

Well, it is no use being indignant, and after all Woffles is, as the young gentleman in the flannels poetically expresses it, rather a handful. For I was quite wrong. We have not got rid of that cheery young civil-engineer. Not by any means.

We are in climbing mood to-day; our appetites for mountain air and panoramic scenery, as well as for breakfast, thoroughly whetted by our little excursion to the foot of Barber's Hill. So we put on our stoutest boots and briefest skirts, and boldly disdaining the services of a guide to point the way to the ruined castle, a mile and a half off, which is fully visible from the time we start, set off with light hearts and a full stock of sandwiches and sketching materials for Dinas Bran.

Our road lies across the bridge, and just at the opposite end is an establishment for the dissemination of woolly dogs, wafery horses, and other juvenile luxuries, to which we have been attracted in passing by the sight of a stock of wondrous walking-sticks, neat knotted canes some four or five feet long, and shod with iron spikes, the very things, George vehemently protests, for—— For driving cattle? strikes in a familiar voice. Certainly. Master Woffles is quite right. Get your price for them in Smithfield any day. Climbing hills? Yes. You might put them to that use meanwhile. But we are not thinking of going mountaineering now? Without a guide!

So eloquent does the young gentleman in the flannels wax over the dangers of the way: the paths that lead round unexpected corners over the shrub-hidden edge of unanticipated slate-quarries; the treacherous turf that thinly masks the hidden morass; the mountain mist that in a moment wraps the upper world in a more than midnight gloom, through which the uninstructed wayfarer may wander till exhaustion and hunger overpower him, that we really begin to think that, as that young gentleman himself assures us, our irrepressible young friend in the flannels must somehow have been specially commissioned to a sort of guardian angelship, or sweet little cherubship at the very least, on our behalf. If it were not for Edith and George, poor Emma would be for turning back at once, especially in the absence of Adolphus, who has been left at the hotel in blissful enjoyment of the Morning Post and of a shiny black leather bag of particularly choice official papers, which he has brought with him for more leisurely assimilation in the wilds.

But George especially has already been disappointed once to-day in the swollen and muddy state of the stream, which forbids any inaugurating of the new rod. And after all—— So the young gentleman in the flannels carries the day, and in ten more minutes we are in full climb, each armed with an iron-shod walking-cane of duly pantomimic proportions, long enough and strong enough, I trust, to support our adventurous steps over any Cambrian Mont Blanc or Matterhorn.

And they really are rather comfortable things when by-and-by, after half an hour or so of not very severe sauntering up a sloping meadow-path, and past a delicious creeper-covered cottage, and through a farm-yard, and along a deep narrow lane, scented with honeysuckle and flushed with delicate wild-rose, we find ourselves at last upon the short steep turf, where a whole flock of real Welsh mutton is clambering among the jutting rocks, and flourishing its long lean tails—distressingly long and lean just now, when they have newly emerged from the shearer's hands—and striking picturesque attitudes in all sorts of inaccessible places, where a stray blade of grass may be supposed to grow. It is certainly pleasant to be enabled to assert one's independence of the path and take short cuts over the slippery turf without fear of suddenly starting off on a premature return journey towards Llangollen after the unsophisticated usage of Greenwich Hill. None the less, by the way, for what seems to be a rather remarkable local variation of the law of hydrostatics. Commonly speaking, I believe, water is scientifically supposed to find its level by the shortest possible route; and certainly such representations as I have seen of mountain streams and rivulets have always depicted them as precipitating themselves downhill with a perfectly reckless straightforwardness of purpose. Here at Llangollen the tiny torrent—it is not above an inch or so deep—which trickles down the sides of Dinas Bran, finds its level after a much more philosophical, and, as I might say, nineteenth-century fashion. The road of course winds backwards and forwards after the easy-going custom of mountain roads not constructed under the immediate eye of ancient Roman generals, and the stream has quietly taken possession of it, winding backwards and forwards with as unconcerned a ripple as though the law of gravitation had never yet been translated into Welsh.

But I am bound to confess that, even when the beaten path has thus been abandoned, the ascent to Crow Castle does not present those Alpine difficulties which to the uninstructed mind would absolutely necessitate the employment of a guide. We reach the summit in due course, the last two or three hundred yards of the way being remarkable for about the finest show of foxgloves I ever remember to have seen; not hiding, as in my experience is their custom, in ditches and under bushes, but standing out boldly, each by himself, on the bare hill-side. And up above them on the old bare poll of the sugar-loaf-shaped hill stands still a fairly respectable remnant of the grand old castle of Dinas Bran. A fine old eagle's nest truly as ever justified a patriotic baron in transferring his allegiance, now to English Edward or Richard, now to Welsh Gruffydd—as our old friend King Griffith more characteristically spells himself, under the grim shadow of these thick black walls—without fear of forfeiture or attainder. Two thousand years, according to Llan-gollen reckoning, have those grim old walls frowned down upon the valley of the Dee; and I fancy something like a thousandth part that number of days energetically employed would put them in condition to regard with considerable philosophy any attempt at chastisement, unless it took the very inconsiderate shape of a battery of Armstrongs along the ridge of the Eglwyseg Rocks yonder, from which float to us across the deep sun-steeped valley peaceful tickings, as of a shopful of clocks, from the picks and hammers of the lime-quarriers busily employed in defacing the fine old weather-stained face of the crags.

But, however promptly an invading army might find its way down again, I do not think, as far as my own experience goes, that it would require any very highly organised corps of guides to pilot it up. And in that sense I express myself with some emphasis as, after duly admiring the distant view framed so artistically in the one still complete window, and have threaded the crumbling old vaulted corridor that once led to the vanished banquet-hall, and passed with dire awe into what without doubt may—or may not—have been once the deepest dungeon beneath the castle walls, and very nearly taken a sensational header into the happily choked-up well unexpectedly yawning in the middle of a steeply sloping path, we establish ourselves under the shady side of a black old one-eyed monster of a wall, and devote

ourselves to the consumption of the soothing sherry and the sustaining sandwich.

But at this moment our guide becomes suddenly alive to the necessity of making a pilgrimage to the quaint little wooden domicile in elaborate churchwarden's Gothic, where Mr. Samuel Jones and "his jolly wife," and his faithful dog reside—my little local guide-book informs me—all the year round, intent, like a miniature St. Bernard of the period, upon not only rescuing the erring traveller, but furnishing him with those bulkier forms of liquid refreshment which the silver flask of pedestrian life cannot supply.

Doubtless he thinks that in very gratitude for the foaming glass of ginger-beer which hisses so pleasantly down my parched throat, I shall find it impossible to pursue so painful a topic. Emma, I can see, is quite overcome by the delicate attention, and changes the subject abjectedly. But Margaret is made of sterner stuff, and the last ginger-beer cork has not yet finished its thoughtless flight before I demand sternly and categorically whether, when he offered his services as guide, the young gentleman in the flannels was aware that there was a broad and beaten path right to the very castle gates?

Bless his soul, no, he replies; how should he? Never was within a hundred miles of the place before in his life!

Is it a relief or a shock to our feelings when on our return home—by an entirely different route improvised by our self-constituted guide with all the calm assurance of a veteran inhabitant—we find that during our absence Adolphus has fraternised with the masculine chief of the party in whose company we yesterday lionised Plas Newydd, who turns out to be a distinguished member of the identical Department with which the bulk of his own most interesting official correspondence is carried on, and—the uncle of the young gentleman in the flannels? On the whole, perhaps, the former predominates. As for carrying out any portion of the remainder of our tour without the aid of that accomplished young gentleman's local experience, that is evidently not to be thought of. And, indeed, as he himself thoughtfully observes, that experience having been invented solely for our behoof we need surely have no scruple in availing ourselves of it. And under those circumstances it is clearly a gain to have our acquaintanceship put upon a regular footing. To the punctilious Adolphus, this

formal introduction to the well-intentioned young man, whose very irregular mode of rescuing Miss Woffles has placed him for the last two days in so distressingly false a position, is I am sure nothing less than an absolute boon. Even to me it is some sort of satisfaction to be able to abuse him by some more particular designation than that of the young gentleman in the flannels. And upon this point he forthwith enlightens us with characteristic impudence. "Answers to the name of Edward Emilius," he strikes in airily—as the great Sir Theophilus Tattenham introduces briefly "My nephew," as who should add, "and a nephew upon whom I do not dote with intensity." Yes; there's a Smith about somewhere, he believes; but as a rule he don't answer to that.

So under Edward Emilius's guidance we make our pilgrimage to the picturesque old ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey, where our archaeological experiences are not a little expanded by our cicerone's translation of the somewhat dilapidated inscription over the fine old rose-window which surmounts the three lancet-shaped arches over the western archway, and which he stoutly maintains to be an announcement that "This work was accomplished by Abbot—Somebody—in the time of Adam." The worthy farmer whose well-earned slumbers are nightly celebrated in the cloisters once no doubt made vocal with the nasal nocturnes of the goodly colony of monks who now sleep more soundly still under the recently cleared pavement of the desecrated old church, is doubtful on the point; being inclined to think that the Adam in question was, as the learned folks tell him, no other than the abbot himself, and that that worthy ecclesiastic lived and built in the reign of our English Lionheart.

But Edward Emilius points to a quaint old broken-backed inscription which is even now legible on a dilapidated fragment of the very cloisters itself, and runs, "hic jacet Arvrvet," and asks triumphantly if he has ever read his Bible and what it was that rested upon Ararat!

But Adam or Noah, abbot or antediluvian, whoever built this dear old ruined abbey nestling down in its quiet sheltered valley, and even now in its utter dilapidation showing ample traces of its former magnificence, did a great work, and one which our architects of these more enlightened times do not quite appear to have the secret of imitating. No stint of stone or labour was there in those serious

old days. If my little local guide be right—and, pace Edward Emilius, I am inclined to put more confidence even in its archaeological statements than in his—it seems in its downfall to have furnished no inconsiderable proportion of the materials for half the more modern churches in the neighbourhood. And even now its ruined arches and roofless aisles, as they lie quietly basking in the long streaks of placid sunlight that come streaming down through the fine old trees, might serve, were not this kind of Vandalism at least happily banished from among us, to supply columns and carvings, and benitiers, and encaustic tiles, and such-like architectural delicacies, for at least half-a-dozen more.

As for the Pillar of Eliseg, which gives its name to this Valley of the Cross, but which it appears was never a cross at all—except in the pious imagination of General Cromwell's military iconoclasts, who forthwith proceeded to tumble to the ground the quaint old monument of great-grand-filial affection reared in the neighbouring meadow by Concenn the son of Cateli to the memory of his stout old ancestor—I cannot say there is any very particular beauty about that even now that Mr. T. Lloyd, of Trevor Hall, has set what time has left of it carefully upon its poor old legs again. But its base makes a capital table round which to lounge as we discuss our midday sandwich; and as Edward Emilius is careful to propose in glowing terms the health of our hospitable host Mr. Eliseg and his family, I trust that the great-grand-filial feelings of Concenn the son of Cateli are not too seriously outraged by our impertinence.

Then after this little interlude of valley to take the stiffness out of our town-bred ankles after yesterday's scramble to the grim old war-eagle's eyrie on Dinas Bran, we brace ourselves for another little mountain excursion, and alpenstock in hand set out for the summit of the Geraint. A hundred feet higher this than our first venture, and though your Alpine Clubbist thinks scorn of anything that can be reckoned in less than five figures, let me tell him that a hundred feet are a hundred feet to limbs accustomed only to the considerate slope of Constitution Hill. There are lovely views to be caught from more than one point upon our upward journey, and it is remarkable what zeal we all show in pointing them out to each other, and how conscientiously we follow each change in the beautiful broad masses of light and shade, as some fresh

turn in the ever-winding path opens out a new perspective, or a passing cloud seems to change for the moment the whole contour of the valley that opens out gradually under our feet.

Our party has the usual tendency to disintegration. The elders—and Emma always goes in for being an elder when there are any other matrons in company, though she can be young enough still when we are alone together—make a solemn little band of four; the gentlemen no doubt discussing politics, and the ladies the last new thing in bonnets, or the next new audacity in servants, as usual. The two young spoony people adopt the earliest possible opportunity of taking an obviously wrong turning, and vanish promptly into space, deaf to the voice of the charmer, who, in the shape of Woffles, screams lustily after them till carried bodily off by Edith and the unengaged sister, who, in the absence of George, have struck up an alliance offensive and defensive for the rest of their natural life, or at all events for such portion of it as may be unoccupied by any deeper or newer devotion. George does not care for climbing a lot of stupid hills, and remains at home, deep in the mysteries of green-tails, and spider-flies, and great red spinners, and little pale blues, and whirling blues, and Coch-y-Bonddus—I should like to see a Coch-y-Bonddus—and all the rest of the mysterious means by which the wily trout is to be beguiled from the sparkling rush of the leaping stream, or the cool depths of his comfortable pool. For after this pleasant little spell of hot dry weather the waters are beginning to subside and the mud to settle down, and that joyous prospect of killing something of course obliterates all other considerations in the masculine mind. How it is that Mr. Edward Emilius has not been overcome by its fascinations I cannot think. But here he is striding up the Barber's Hill as calmly as though it were on his regular road to business, and no such word as trout or fly had ever found place in his vocabulary. And, everybody else being otherwise paired off, the honour of Mr. Edward Emilius's special companionship falls to me.

This arrangement, however, does not last long. In fact, the ascent of the Geraint, in spite of its supposed additional hundred feet above Dinas Bran, must somehow be a very much shorter affair than it is commonly set down as being, for we certainly cannot have been more than half an hour scrambling and panting and stopping to admire

the view, and capping verses from Byron and Wordsworth, and effecting an elaborate exchange of misinformation on all manner of points of botanical and geological and legendary lore, and conducting ourselves generally like a couple of promising young pupils from the County College at Colney Hatch, when, just as the traditional spot of the unlucky Barber-schoolmaster's execution comes most unexpectedly into sight, my attendant cavalier suddenly makes some remark about "the missis," and I find my lord has been quietly setting me down in his own mind—as I have no doubt he would call it—as Miss Woffles's nursery-governess!

For once in a way I am really grateful to Woffles. That she should have remained all this time without getting into any serious scrape is certainly rather a phenomenal state of things, and one hardly possible to be protracted much longer. But the moment actually selected for thrusting herself into a position of imminent peril is certainly most happily chosen, and the scream with which Edith announces that "my young charge," as Mr. Edward Emilius politely terms her, is hanging from a bush by her pinafore over the edge of a pleasant little perpendicular bank five-and-twenty feet or so in height, offers at once an escape and a safety-valve. Of course, it is Mr. Edward Emilius Smith who rescues Miss Woffles from her dangerous predicament, and on whose head are poured out the vials of that young lady's wrath for having, in so doing, "poilt" the unfortunate butterfly in pursuit of which she has been risking her valuable neck, and whose crumpled remains she indignantly holds out to her gasping aunt in proof of the charge.

And then comes Adolphus's turn. Poor Adolphus! What with Woffles, and what with other members of his family, apoplexy will certainly be his portion before ever this little tour in Wales comes to an end. It is not to be expected that I can go tête-à-tête about the hills all day long with a self-possessed young gentleman who has deliberately taken me for a nursery-governess! And as for shaking off Mr. Edward Emilius Smith by any process short of absolutely wedging myself inaccessibly in between Emma and Lady Tattenham, I know that most uncivil engineer much too well by this time to have any idea of that. So I wedge myself inaccessibly in between Emma and Lady Tattenham accordingly. And Emma, like

a model elder sister as she is, not only closes promptly in to protect my flank herself, but signals up the heavy batteries in the persons of Adolphus and Sir Theophilus Tattenham. Whereon Mr. Edward Smith, finding the position impregnable, accepts the situation, and avenges himself upon Adolphus.

Poor Adolphus! He cannot snub the man who has just this moment, for the second time, saved his daughter from premature obliteration. But as his tormentor glides lightly from the particular legend of the Barber-schoolmaster's execution on this spot to the kindred subject of what he calls "hanging matches" in general, and borrows his handkerchief for the purpose of showing him how to construct the true Calcraft knot, and urgently cautions him, should it ever be his fate to be operated upon, to insist upon a drop of at least six feet, that unhappy government official's face is a sight to see.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY E. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXXVI. HAROLD FINDS HIMSELF AN OUTCAST ON THE SILVER ISLE.

THE story was told. Without reservation, but with a delicacy which could not be surpassed, Harold related all that he knew of Clarice from the time of her betrayal. Frequently was he stopped in his recital by Margaret's tears and anguish, and his heart was racked by the sight of her suffering. He knew he could do nothing to lessen it, and he did not attempt by a word to exculpate Mauvain or himself from the wrong which lay at their door; but, even in the midst of her own grief, Margaret recognised that the man who stood before her with downcast head and eyes suffused with tears was more sinned against than sinning. Nothing yet had been said concerning Evangeline; her name had not been uttered during the interview. Harold seemed to be waiting for a cue from Margaret, and she did not give it; her mind was occupied only with the image of her beloved Clarice.

"There is still something more," she said; "does my sister live?"

"I cannot tell you," replied Harold, seeing an opportunity of introducing Evangeline's name. "A year after the departure of Ranf and Evangeline for the Silver Isle——"

He purposely paused, and made no effort

to complete the sentence, and Margaret, detecting a hidden meaning in his tone, gazed at him with a new and suddenly-awakened interest.

"Yes, yes—go on."

"A year after their departure your sister suddenly disappeared."

"You made an endeavour to find her! You did not leave her to a worse fate than had already befallen her!"

"I made every endeavour to discover her; for months I continued my enquiries—without success. I could learn nothing of her; and I believe I am correct in affirming that from that day Mauvain has never beheld her."

"Then she is dead!" cried Margaret. "No hope remains! Not in this world shall I be able to obtain her forgiveness for my cruel desertion of her."

Harold was silent; he had no consolation to offer. He waited till this paroxysm of grief had passed away, and then he said,

"You saw Evangeline when she first arrived upon this isle, a child."

"Yes; and my heart was drawn to her. I begged that she might be allowed to enter my home as one of my family, and the islanders consented to my so receiving her."

"A natural prompting; you know that Ranf is not her father."

"Ranf himself informed me that she was doubly orphaned."

"Had you no suspicion—it is but conjecture on my part; but it is in my mind as an impression impossible to efface—that she might be as near to you in blood as she is in affection?"

"Great Heaven!" cried Margaret, seeing what he wished to convey. "You confirm my own suspicions! Ah, if it be true, then is Evangeline doubly dear to me! But the proof—the proof!"

"The proof is in her face; by a hundred signs too difficult to describe, am I convinced of it—as I was when I first saw her, a child, in the old land. I am unable to assist you further; but there is one who may help you—the hunchback, who, in some strange way, appears to hold the threads of this mystery in his hands."

"I thank you—I thank you. Ranf is our true friend; I honour and love him. He bade me be patient and silent, and to trust in him. I have been neither patient nor silent. How was it possible, suffering as I have been suffering? At what are you looking?"

She moved to Harold's side by the

window, through which he was looking into the garden. By the soft light of the moon they saw Evangeline and Joseph Sylvester walking slowly to a wooden shed, on the roof of which some dove-cotes were built. The young man's arm was round the girl's waist, and she leant towards him tenderly, confidingly, her head almost touching his breast. A sweet and wistful smile hovered about Margaret's lips.

"There is consolation in those signs. They love each other, and I shall have my sister's child always with me. Heaven be thanked!" Already had she accepted it as a fact; Evangeline was hers, of her blood, and would soon be bound to her by even closer ties of love and kinship. "How wonderful are God's ways! It almost appears as if through all the years, and amidst our deep unhappiness and deeper wrong, He has been working to this end. See! Joseph is climbing the ladder to the pigeon-house. Then a message has come from Ranf! Yes; the bird is in his hand, and he is descending with it. I must go to them."

She was about to leave the room when she turned to Harold, and said, holding out her hand to him:

"I forgive you, and I believe in what you have told me. It was not in your power to help my beloved sister, or you would have done so—I am sure you would have done so."

"I would have laid down my life in her cause," said Harold, in a low sweet tone; "you honour and comfort me by allowing me to touch your hand."

"When you leave here to-night," said Margaret, "do you go back to Mauvain?"

"No," replied Harold; he had not told her the personal particulars of his interview with Mauvain, and she was not aware that Harold had renounced his friendship—"No; it may be that I shall never look upon his face again; it must be that he and I shall never more clasp hands in friendship."

"You have quarrelled with him?"

"I have broken with him for ever. When I learnt from his own lips—as I did for the first time to-day—the true particulars of the part he had played in your sister's life, I bade him farewell."

"Then you have no home?"

"Absolutely," said Harold, with a smile. "I shall have to-night to beg a shelter from the sky."

"No," said Margaret. "Stop with us—at least for a little while. I will explain to my husband and children as much

as is necessary to ensure you an honest welcome."

"I accept with gratitude. It will do me good to sleep for a night beneath your roof."

With a motion expressive of gratification at his acceptance of her hospitality, Margaret hastened from the room into the garden. Joseph and Evangeline were walking towards the house, but seeing Margaret, paused till she came up to them.

"See, mother," said Joseph; "a message from the mountains. Hold the bird while I unloosen the paper. There; the message is to you, mother. Read it."

Margaret moved to a patch of moonlight, and read:

"Ranf to Margaret Sylvester: The time has come. Last night, as you know, a ship anchored in the bay. To-morrow, at sunset, come you and your son Joseph, to the hut in the mountain, from which you will see a flag flying. Let no one else accompany you. I know that you have to-day visited Mauvain. Believe nothing that you have heard in that house; for their own purposes, and to gain their own ends, those men will lie and lie; but the more subtle villain of the two is Harold—as I shall prove to you to-morrow, not from the lips but by the words of your beloved sister Clarice. Let no person know what is in this paper, and bid your family not to retire to rest to-morrow night until you return from your visit to the mountain. You will have that to do upon your return, and that to see, which will add to the happiness of you and yours."

Margaret read this missive twice, the first time in bewilderment, the second with a clearer comprehension. The supreme moment of her life appeared to be approaching: the moment of which she had dreamed, which she had yearned for, hoped for, during all the years which had intervened since she lost her sister, but the issue of which was as completely hidden from her as the mystery of death itself. She accepted every word written by the hunchback as sincerest truth; there was in her mind neither doubt nor desire to question. "You will have that to do upon your return, and that to see, which will add to the happiness of you and yours." It would be so; every action of the hunchback's life proved that he would not utter what it was not in his power to accomplish. She looked up to the window of the room she had left, and saw Harold standing there with a tender smile upon his lips. "The

more subtle villain of the two is Harold—as I shall prove to you to-morrow, not from the lips but by the words of your beloved sister Clarice!" Instinctively she drew Evangeline to her side, and passed her arm around the girl, as she would have done in the days gone by around Clarice, to protect her from evil. In the light of this startling revelation Harold's face grew distorted in her eyes; the story he had told her sounded in her ears as a mockery; he was utterly, utterly false, and his very presence in her house was a danger to those she loved.

"Keep in the garden, Joseph," she said hurriedly; "do not come in for a little while."

She hastened into the house, and into the room in which she had left Harold. He advanced towards her with an expression of quick sympathy, almost of love, in his face. She pointed to the door.

"Go!" she said.

He caught his breath, and looked around as though another voice than hers had spoken.

"Do you not hear me?" she cried, her pulses throbbing with indignant passion. "Go! And never set foot within door of mine again. You are a false and shameless villain!"

He became grave instantly, and moved to the door. But, before he left, he turned, and with a gentle pitying smile, said:

"It is useless to ask why you thrust me from your house?"

"Quite useless," she replied, in her sternest tone. "I shall pray that I may never look upon your face again!"

He made no further attempt to obtain an explanation, but passed from the room, saying:

"May happiness attend you and yours to the last days of your lives!"

The next moment he was gone.

"My words have come true," he said, with a sad whimsical light in his eyes. "I shall have to beg shelter from the sky. Be merciful, clouds, and do not weep as you pass over my bed of leaves! Let me think—let me think! I shall have time, being alone now, quite alone, and without a friend. And there is Eternity before me—time enough, indeed! To whom am I indebted for Margaret Sylvester's extraordinary change of feeling? Easily answered. She received a message from Ranf; my name was doubtless mentioned in it, and not in flattery. I noticed Margaret's stern look as she stood in the moonlight, and raised her eyes to the

window at which I was standing. Ranf is the friend I have to thank. I thank you, friend. But you and I have not done with each other; the last page of the book is not yet reached. Whence came that soft white bird, with its false message hidden under its tender wing? From the mountain, or from the hunchback's fairy-house of wonders? The latter is the nearest; it may not be time lost to wander in that direction. If Ranf be there, he shall give me satisfaction."

Towards Ranf's new house Harold therefore directed his steps, and sauntered listlessly around its ring of wild flowers, watching for a human sign.

"I will not enter like a thief," he thought; "if I can convey to the hunchback's ears that I am here, he will not flinch from a meeting."

For an hour and more he lingered, and noticed through the hedges which Ranf had formed that there were lights in some of the windows of the house. At length he fancied he heard the rustle of a dress, and he called aloud, at a venture:

"Bertha Christof!"

She stepped towards him, and replied:

"Who calls?"

"A friend. Let me speak with you; you have nothing to fear."

She approached with timid steps to within arm's-length of him, and he saw that his guess was correct when he called her name.

"Whom do you seek?"

"Ranf."

"He is not here; he is on the mountain."

"Will it be difficult to find him?"

"You will see a flag flying over his hut."

"I will seek him there—but not to-night. Do you remember my face, Bertha? I was in the court-house when Ranf was on his trial."

"Yes; I remember you."

"Bertha, this isle seems fatal to some. It condemned you to a life of loneliness; so am I condemned."

"Are you alone?"

"Utterly alone, and without a friend. So, for better fortune, shake hands with me."

She gave her hand, and he held it in his for a moment or two.

"And now, Bertha, I have a fancy. Bring me a flower from the grave of your child."

"Wait—wait!" she cried, and ran from

him, returning soon with a handful of flowers, which he placed in his bosom.

"I am not entirely forsaken," he murmured, as he walked back into the woods, and laid himself down to sleep.

CHAPTER XXXVII. MARGARET RECEIVES THE RECORDS OF HAROLD'S GUILT.

"MOTHER," said Joseph, "Ran's flag is flying from the mountain top. It is far to go. You will scarcely have strength enough to reach it."

"You do not know, my dear, of what I am capable. In the old world before your father and I met—and even afterwards for a time—I walked day after day, week after week, month after month, and was seldom more than healthfully fatigued. I have more than a woman's strength, my dear; and were I weaker than I am, the purpose for which we are now treading these strange paths for the first time, would not allow me to break down."

"You did not show me the message you received from Ranf."

"He desired me not to let any person see what he wrote. You will soon know all. Ranf is wise, and has been working for our happiness—for mine, and yours, and Evangeline's."

"For Evangeline's!" repeated Joseph Sylvester softly to himself, and his mother smiled tenderly as she heard the loving murmur.

"You love Evangeline, my boy."

"Yes, mother."

"We have seen the growth of this love, my dear, and it has made us glad. We knew that you would speak to us when you deemed it right. And Evangeline loves you, with a soul's pure love. It is the sweetest thing, my boy. But for your father's love, my life would have been very dark. He met me in the days of my despair, and brought light to my heart."

"You have seldom spoken of those old days, mother—and never freely. I have often been curious to hear. Sometimes I have asked father to tell me of them, and he has always replied: 'Your mother will speak to you of them, when the time serves; but never refer to them unless she encourages you, for in doing so you might bring to her the memory of a terrible grief.'"

"They have ever been tender of me; God will reward them."

"He has rewarded them; they are happy, as I am. You have made us so, mother."

"It has not been a merit on one side, dear; we have striven for each other. That is the truest happiness. When each strives for each, when each thinks for each, when each bears for each, then it is that love's sweet labour produces the best and brightest flowers. I have had both love and sorrow in my days. During my early girlhood I and your grandfather, who died long before you were born, and one who was very, very dear to me—my sister Clarice, Joseph—travelled about the small villages and towns of the world, working for our living, sometimes not knowing to-day where food was to come from to-morrow. Our wandering life was happy and beautiful, for love was with us, and lightened our toil. Then my father died, and being before his death misled as to the character of a man who professed to be our friend, left us to his guardianship and his care, until we arrived at an age when we should be able to protect ourselves from the snares which surround the innocent and pure in the world beyond the seas. Joseph, at that time, my heart, my life, my soul, was bound up in my sister Clarice, and when she was torn from me by treachery, I felt as if all hope and sweetness had fled for ever from the world. The errand we are on to-night concerns this dear and cherished being; a mystery is about to be unfolded, and I both yearn and dread to meet it. But Ranf's message should give me courage."

They walked on in silence until Joseph said, between his teeth:

"Those who wronged you, mother—do they live?"

"If they did, and you knew them, what would you do?"

"They should render an account to me," cried the young man; "they should not live to commit another wrong!"

"Heaven will punish them," said Margaret solemnly. "No evil deed is ever committed without bringing in its train its just reward. Bring to your mind the story connected with this very mountain. The crime, the suffering of a life-time, and then in the end the Divine anger which proclaimed that the sinner shall be judged hereafter! Joseph!" she cried in terror, "what is that moving yonder?"

Joseph looked in the direction of Margaret's outstretched arm. "I see nothing, mother. You have been frightened by a shadow."

But, indeed, it was the form of a man of which Margaret had caught a transient

glance—of a man weakened by fatigue and hunger, who was creeping slowly and wearily upwards. At the sound of Margaret's voice, he dropped behind a jutting rock, and remained concealed until they were out of sight.

"Upon my honour," he muttered, "I never knew the value of food till now. It is really necessary. I can sympathise with the famished creatures I have met with here and there in my way through life, and have generally passed by without a thought. Poor devils! I am in the same plight as yourselves. If some witch were to throw me a bone, I would throw myself on my knees in gratitude. Or a bottle of wine! That would be a more charitable gift. I have nothing to offer in return except the immortal part of myself, which, if I can arrive at its worth from the knowledge of the mortal part of myself, would not be reckoned a fair exchange for a meal. Harold, you are beginning to see something of life; all that is past has been comedy. This is grim tragedy. Well, it would have been a pity if you had passed away with what, I perceive now, has been but a limited experience. How weak I feel! I shall think myself fortunate if I reach the hunchback's gay flag with an hour's life in me. You have trained badly, Harold. Is it hunger that hurts you, my man? No, I swear it! If I could regain the esteem of a woman, I should be content to yield my life without a pang."

Margaret and Joseph continued their upward way until they arrived at Ranf's hut, where the hunchback awaited them.

"Welcome to my mountain home," he said. "You look around in wonder; there is no need to do so; it supplies all that I require, and that is enough for a man. See—in the roof are my birds, and here are goats that feed out of my hand. I am content; I have been able to do that upon which my heart was set. But it is not to talk of myself that I have asked you to take this toilsome journey. Joseph, leave us for awhile; I wished you to accompany your mother for her guidance and protection. What she learns from me is her secret, to be disclosed to others of her will, not of mine. Remain without until we call for you."

When Margaret and he were alone, Ranf said: "I have been setting my house in order. For years I have worked to a certain end, and to-night that end is reached. Margaret Sylvester, of all the inhabitants of the Silver Isle you were the

only one who, on my arrival here, appeared to regard me as a human creature, imbued with human feeling. On the first night of our meeting you offered me the hospitality of your house, and with your own hands you made me up a bed. But it was not that which won me; it was your likeness to a lady whom I met but once in the old world, and that under the strangest circumstances. I have no intention to occupy your time with a narration of my life and experiences; I have written them down in this packet, which I place now in your hands on this understanding: You will yourself read first what is herein written, and then, at your discretion, you will permit two other persons to read the record—Evangeline and another whom you will see before you sleep."

"Another?" said Margaret. "Whom?"

"You will know by your own prompting; it is not in accordance with my purpose to give you any other clue. I place the seal of secrecy upon the three persons to whom I have chosen to reveal much of my outer and something of my inner life, and I leave it to you to decide whether you will keep or burn the record, after you have made yourself, and those I have indicated, acquainted with its contents. But its fate and its revelations are of small consequence in comparison with this Book which I now place in your hands."

Margaret received the Book with trembling hands. A flood of tears gushed from her eyes, and with almost inarticulate cries she pressed it to her lips, and kissed it again and again.

"My sister's Bible!" she sobbed. "My sister's Bible! Oh, my sister! my wronged, my darling sister! It is as if you were standing before me, as in the olden time, and we were children again! Clarice! Clarice! forgive me for my desertion of you! If I had known!—if I had known——!"

"Margaret Sylvester," said the hunchback, in a tone as gentle as the tenderest-hearted woman could have used, "no human being has less cause for reproach than yourself. But your sufferings will soon be over; and when in a few hours you reflect that, in the hands of a mighty mysterious Power, I have been the means of restoring peace to your wounded heart, understand that the only motive which has urged me on, and which, when fortune strangely favoured me, helped me to success, is the love, the infinite love, that I bear for Evangeline. When you read

my record, you will better understand the meaning of the words I now utter. I found the Bible in my mother's hut, but it was by the merest accident—if you please to call it so—that I discovered the piteous Confession it cunningly concealed. These sheets were hidden between its pages. Do you recognise the writing?"

"My sister's!" cried Margaret, seizing Ranf's hand, and kissing it. "Oh, blessed chance that sent you to the Silver Isle!"

"There is more than chance in it. It is destiny—which has led to the events of this night. In this hut, upon this lonely mountain, untrodden for generations, until to-day, by any human foot but mine, your sister's Confession was discovered by me. I said in my message to you yesternight that I knew of your visit to Mauvain's house. I knew more—I knew that both Harold and Mauvain received you there. I am in ignorance of what passed between you, nor do I wish to be informed. It will not help us. As I have already said, I have worked to my end, and it is accomplished. But I said in the message conveyed by my white dove that, of the two, Harold was the more subtle villain, and that I would prove it to you by the words of your beloved sister. The proof is in your hand. It is my desire that you read her Confession before you depart from this hut to your happier home in the valley.

He sat a little apart from her whilst she read, and with a keen observant eye watched the varying emotions which her face betrayed. Sobs, infinite compassion, terrible indignation, all were there; and often she was so overcome, and so blinded by the tears, that for minutes she could not proceed. She heard every word she read; her sister's voice accompanied the written Confession of a heart's agony, and when at length the end was reached, she raised her white face to the sympathising face of Ranf, and whispered:

"The child! What became of my sister's child?"

"If Nature does not lie," replied the hunchback, "and if all proof and circumstance are not miraculously at fault, your sister's child lives in Evangeline."

"Oh, thou gracious God!" cried Margaret, sinking on her knees, and clasping her sister's Bible to her bosom; "I thank Thee for Thy wondrous mercy!"

With head bowed down to her breast, with her lips pressed to the blessed Book, she remained for some time in silent prayer, and Ranf did not disturb her.

She rose to her feet.

"That is all," said the hunchback. "Hasten your steps home, and the moment you reach it, you and all who are dear to you, proceed without delay to the house I have built, over the portal of which in golden letters is inscribed the word, 'Chrysanthos.' Do as I bid you, implicitly, and without question. You will obey me?"

"Yes. I should not deserve to live if I hesitated."

"You know now who it is who betrayed your sister. But for the evidence you hold in your hands, you might have found it difficult to believe that there existed on earth so plausible and smooth-tongued a villain. But the past is past. Let it die. A happy future is before you and yours."

"I must tell you," said Margaret. "Evangeline and Joseph are lovers."

"I know it. Go quickly. If you knew what I could tell you, you would not linger a moment."

"Will you not come with us?"

"No. I have work to do here. Good-night."

"Good-night, dearest friend. How can I thank you?"

Before he was aware of her intention, she pressed him in her arms, and kissed him on the lips. Then she and Joseph took their departure. He watched them as they descended the mountain, and then, with his hand upon his mouth and eyes, he entered his hut.

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ASPHODEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIXEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER VII. "HIS HERTE BATHED IN A BATH OF BLISSE."

DAPHNE'S boat came home from the builder's at the end of three weeks of longing and expectation, a light wherry-shaped boat, not the tub-like sea-going dingey, but a neat little craft which would have done no discredit to a Thames waterman. Daphne was in raptures; Mr. Turchill was impressed into her service, in nowise reluctant; and all the mornings of that happy June were devoted to the art of rowing a pair of sculls on the rapid Avon. Never had the river been in better condition; there was plenty of water, but there had been no heavy rains since April, and the river had not overflowed its natural limits; the stream ran smoothly between its green and willowy banks, just such a lenient tide as Horace loved to sing.

When Daphne took up a new thing it was a passion with her. She was at the exuberant age when all fresh fancies are fevers. She had had her fever for water-colours, for battledore and shuttlecock, for crewel-work. She had risen at day-break to pursue each new delight: but this fancy for the boat was the most intense of all her fevers, for the love of the river was a love dating from infancy, and she had never been able to gratify it thoroughly until now. Every evening in the billiard-room she addressed the same prayer to Edgar Turchill, when she bade him good-night: "Come as early as you can to-morrow morning, please." And to do her pleasure the Squire of Hawksyard rose at cock-

crow and rode six miles in the dewy morning, so as to be at the boat-house in Sir Vernon's meadow before Arden church clock struck seven.

Let him be there as early as he might Daphne was always waiting for him, fresh as the morning, in her dark blue cotton gown and sailor hat, the sleeves tucked up to the elbow to give free play to her supple wrists, her arms lily-white in spite of wind and weather.

"It's much too good of you," said she, in her careless way, not ungrateful, but with the air of a girl who thinks men were created to wait upon her. "How very early you must have been up."

"Not so much earlier than you. It is only an hour's ride from Hawksyard, even when I take it gently."

"And you have had no breakfast, I daresay."

"I have had nothing since the tumbler of St. Galmier you poured out for me in the billiard-room last night."

"Poor—dear—soul!" sighed Daphne, with a pause after each word. "How quite too shocking. We must institute a gipsy tea-kettle. This kind of thing shall not occur again."

She looked at him with her loveliest smile, as much as to say: "I have made you my slave, but I mean your bondage to be pleasant."

When he came to the boat-house next morning he found a kettle singing gaily on a rakish-looking gipsy-stove, a table laid for breakfast inside the boat-house, a smoking dish of eggs-and-bacon, and the faithful Bink doing butler, rough and rustic, but devoted.

"I wonder whether she has read Don Juan?" thought Edgar. The water, the gipsy

breakfast, the sweet face smiling at him, reminded him of an episode in that poem. "Were I shipwrecked to-morrow I would not wish to awaken in a fairer paradise," he said to himself, while Bink adjusted a camp-stool for him, breathing his hardest all the time. "This is a delicious surprise," he exclaimed.

"The eggs-and-bacon?"

"No; the privilege of a tête-à-tête breakfast with you."

"Tête-à-fiddlestick; Bink is my chaperon. If you are impertinent I will ask Mr. MacCloskie to join us to-morrow morning. Sugar? Yes, of course, sugar and cream. Aren't the eggs-and-bacon nice? I cooked them. It was Bink's suggestion. I was going to confine myself to rolls and strawberry jam; but the eggs-and-bacon are more fun, aren't they? You should have heard how they frizzled and sputtered in the frying-pan. I had no idea bacon was so noisy."

"Your first lesson in cookery," said Edgar. "We shall hear of you graduating at South Kensington."

"My first lesson, indeed! Why, I fried pancakes over a spirit-lamp ever so many times at Asnières; and I don't know which smelt nastiest, the pancakes or the lamp. Our dormitory got into awful disgrace about it."

She had seated herself on her camp-stool and was drinking tea, while she watched Edgar eat the eggs-and-bacon with an artistic interest in the process.

"Is the bacon done?" she asked. "Did I frizzle it long enough?"

"It's simply delicious; I never ate such a breakfast."

It was indeed a meal in fairyland. The soft clear morning light, the fresh yet balmy atmosphere, the sun-lit river and shadowy boat-house, all things about and around lent their enchantment to the scene. Edgar forgot that he had ever cared for any one in the world except this girl, with the soft grey eyes and sunny hair, and all too captivating smile. To be with her, to watch her, to enjoy her girlishness and bright vivacity, to minister to her amusement and wait upon her fancies—what better use could a young man, free to take his pleasure where he liked, find for his life? And far away in the future, in the remoteness of years to come, Edgar Turchill saw this lovely being, tamed and sobered and subdued into the pattern of his ideal wife, losing no charm that made her girlhood lovely, but gaining the holier graces

of womanhood and wifehood. To-day she was little more than a child, seeking her pleasure as a child does, draining the cup of each new joy like a child, and he knew that he was no more to her than the agreeable companion of her pleasures. But such an association, such girlish friendship so freely given, must surely ripen into a warmer feeling. His pulses could not be so deeply stirred and hers give no responsive throb. There must be some sympathy, some answering emotion in a nature so intensely sensitive.

Cheered by such hopeful reflections, Mr. Turchill eat an excellent breakfast, while Daphne somewhat timorously tried an egg, and was agreeably surprised to find it tasted pretty much the same as if the cook had fried it; a little leathery, perhaps, but that was a detail.

"I feel so relieved," she said. "I shouldn't have been surprised if I had turned them into chickens. And now, if you have quite finished, we'll begin our rowing. I have a conviction that if I don't learn to feather properly to-day I shall never accomplish it while I live."

The boat was ready for them, moored to a steep flight of steps which Bink had hewn out of the bank after his working hours. He had found odd planks in the wood-house, and had contrived to face the steps with timber in a most respectable manner, rewarded by Daphne by sweet words and sweeter looks, and by such a shower of shillings that he had opened a post-office savings-bank book on the strength of her bounty, and felt himself on the road to fortune.

There was the boat in all the smartness of new varnished wood. Daphne had given up her idea of a Pompeian red dado to oblige the boat-builder. There were the oars and sculls, with Daphne's monogram in dark blue and gold; and there, glittering in the sunlight, was the name she had chosen for her craft, in bright golden letters—Nero.

"What a queer name to choose," said Edgar. "He was such an out and out beast, you know."

"Not a bit of it," retorted Daphne. "I read an article yesterday in an old volume of Cornhill, in which the writer demonstrates that he was rather a nice man. He didn't poison Britannicus; he didn't make away with his mamma; he didn't set fire to Rome, though he did play the violin beautifully. He was a very accomplished young man, and the historians of his time were silly gobs

mouches, who jotted down every ridiculous scandal that was floating in society. I think that Taci—— what's his name ought to be ashamed of himself."

"Oh, Nero has been set on his legs, has he?" said Edgar carelessly, as he took the rudder-lines, while Daphne bent over her sculls, and began rather too vehemently to feather. "And I suppose Tiberius was a very meritorious monarch, and all those scandals about Capri were so many airy fictions? Well, it doesn't make much difference to us, does it; except that it will go hard with me by-and-by, when my boys come to learn the history of the future, to have the young scamps tell me that all I learnt at Rugby was bosh."

"At Rugby," cried Daphne, suddenly earnest. "You were at Rugby with my brother, weren't you? Were you great friends?"

Edgar leant over the boat, concerned about some weeds that were possibly interfering with the rudder.

"We didn't see much of each other. He was ever so much younger than I, you know."

"Was he nice? Were people fond of him?"

"Everybody was dreadfully sorry when he died of scarlet fever, poor fellow!" answered Edgar, without looking at her.

"Yes, it was terrible, was it not? I can just remember him. Such a bright handsome boy, full of life and spirits. He used to tease me a good deal, but that is the nature of boys. And then when I was at Brighton there came a letter to say that he was dead, and I had to wear black frocks for ever so long. Poor Loftus! how dearly I should have loved him if he had lived."

"Yes; it would have been nice for you to have a brother, would it not?" said Edgar, still with a shade of embarrassment.

"Nice! It would have been my salvation. To have some one of my own kindred—quite my brother. I love Madoline with all my heart and soul, but she is only my half-sister. I always feel that there is a difference between us. She is my superior. She comes of a better stock. Nobody ever talks of my mother, or my mother's family, but Lina's parentage is in everybody's mouth. She seems to be related, at least in heraldry, to everybody worth knowing in the county. But Loftus would have been the same clay that I am made of, don't you know, neither better nor worse. Blood is thicker than water."

"That's a morbid feeling of yours, Daphne."

"Is it? I'm afraid I have a few morbid feelings."

"Get rid of them. There never was a better sister than Madoline is to you."

"I know it. She is perfection; but that only makes her further away from me. I reverence her, I look up to her and admire her; but I can never feel on an equality with her."

"That shows your good sense. It is an advantage for you to have some one to look up to."

"Yes; but I should like some one on my own level as well."

"You've got me," said Edgar bluntly. "Can't you make a brother of me for the nonce?"

"For ever and always if you like," replied Daphne. "I'm sure I've got the best of the bargain. I don't believe any brother would get up at five o'clock to teach me to row."

Edgar felt very sure that Loftus would not have done it; that short-lived youth having been the very essence of selfishness, and debased by a marked inclination towards juvenile profligacy.

"Brothers are not the most self-sacrificing of human beings," he said. "I think you'll find finer instances of devotion in an Irish or a Scottish foster-brother than in the Saxon blood relation. But Madoline is a sister in a thousand. Take care of that willow," as the boat shot under the drooping foliage of an ancient pollard. "How bright and happy she looked last night!"

"Yes; she had just received a long letter from Gerald, and he talks of coming home sooner than she expected him. He will give up his fishing in Norway, though I believe he had engaged an inland sea all to himself, and he will be home before the end of July. Isn't it nice? I am dying with curiosity to see what he is like."

"Didn't I describe him to you?"

"In the vaguest way. You said I was sure to like him. Now I have an invincible conviction that I shall detest him, just because it is my duty to feel a sisterly affection for him."

"Take care that you keep within the line of duty, and that your affection doesn't go beyond the sisterly limit," said Edgar with a grim smile. "There is no fear of the other thing."

"What a savage look!" cried Daphne laughingly. "How horribly jealous you must be of him." Digitized by Google

"Hasn't he robbed me of my first love?" demanded Edgar; "and now——"

"Don't be so gloomy. Didn't you tell me you had got over your disappointment, and that you meant to be a dear useful bachelor uncle to Madoline's children by-and-by?"

"I don't know about being always a bachelor," said Edgar doubtfully. "That would imply that I hadn't got over my disappointment."

"That is what you said the other day. I am only quoting yourself against yourself. I like to think of you as a perpetual bachelor for Lina's sake. It is a more poetical idea than the notion of your consoling yourself with somebody else."

"Yet a man does generally console himself. It is in human nature."

"Don't say another word," cried Daphne. "You are positively hateful this morning—so low and material. I'm afraid it must be the consequence of eggs-and-bacon, such a vulgar unæsthetic breakfast—Bink's idea. I shall give you bread-and-butter and strawberries to-morrow; if MacCloskie will let me have any strawberries."

"If you were to talk a little less and row a little more, I think we should get on faster," suggested Edgar, smiling at her.

They had got into a spot where a little green peninsula jutted out into the stream, and where the current was almost a whirlpool. The boat had been travelling in a circle for the last five minutes, while Daphne plied her sculls, unconscious of the fact. They were nearing Stratford; the low level meadows lay round them, the tall spire rose yonder above the many-arched Gothic bridge built by good Sir Hugh Clopton before Shakespeare was born. He must have crossed it many and many a time with the light foot of boyhood, a joyous spirit, finding ineffable delight in simplest things; and again, after he had lived his life and had measured himself amidst the greatest minds of his age, in the greatest city of the world, and had toiled and conquered independence and fame, and came back rich enough to buy the great house hard by the grammar-school, how often must he have lounged against the grey stone parapet, in the calm eventide, watching the light linger and fade upon the reedy river, bats and swallows skimming across the water, the grand old Gothic church embowered in trees, and the level meadows beyond. They were in the very heart of Shakespeare's country. Yonder far away to their right lay the meadow-

path by which he walked to Shottery. Memories of him were interwoven with every feature in the landscape.

"Papa told me I was not to go beyond our own meadows," said Daphne, "but of course he meant when I was alone. It is quite different when you are with me."

"Naturally. I am capable of taking care of you."

This kind of thing went on for another week of weather which at worst was showery. They breakfasted in the boat-house every morning, Daphne exercising all her ingenuity in the arrangement of the meal, and making rapid strides in the art of cookery. It must be confessed that Mr. Turchill seemed to enjoy the breakfasts suggested by the vulgar-minded Bink, rather more than those which were direct emanations of Daphne's delicate fancy. He liked broiled mackerel better than cream and raspberry jam. He preferred devilled kidneys to honey-comb and milk rolls. But whatever Daphne set before him he eat, with thankfulness. It was so sweet to spend his mornings in this bright joyous company. It was a grand thing to have so intelligent a pupil, for Daphne was becoming very skilful in the management of her boat. She was able to navigate her bark safely through the most difficult bits of the deep swift river. She could shoot the narrow arches of Stratford Bridge in as good style as a professional waterman.

But when two young pure-minded people are enjoying themselves in this frank easy-going fashion, there is generally some one of mature age near at hand to suggest evil, and to put a stop to their enjoyment. So it was in this case. The rector's wife heard of her niece's watery meanderings and gipsy breakfasts, and took upon herself to interfere. Mr. MacCloskie, who had reluctantly furnished a dish of forced strawberries for the boat-house breakfast, happened to stroll over to Arden Rectory in the afternoon with a basket of the same fruit, as an offering, from himself, to Mrs. Ferrers—an inevitable half-crown tip to the head gardener, and dear at the price, in the lady's opinion. Naturally a man of MacCloskie's consequence required refreshment after his walk, so Mrs. Todd entertained him in her snug little sanctum next the pantry, with a dish of strong tea and a crusty knob of home-baked bread, lavishly buttered. Whereupon, in the course of conversation, Mr. MacCloskie let fall that Miss Daphne was carrying on finely with Mr. Turchill, of Hawksyard, and that he

supposed that would be a match some of these days. Pressed for details, he described the early breakfasts at the boat-house, the long mornings spent on the river, the afternoons at billiards, the tea-drinkings in the conservatory. All this Todd, who was an irrepressible gossip, retailed to her mistress next morning, when the bill of fare had been written, and the campaign of gluttony for the next twenty-four hours had been carefully mapped out.

Mrs. Ferrers heard with the air of profound indifference which she always assumed on such occasions.

"MacCloskie is an incorrigible gossip," she said, "and you are almost as bad."

But, directly she had dismissed Todd, the fair Rhoda went up to her dressing-room and arrayed herself for a rural walk. Life in a pastoral district, with a husband of few ideas, will now and then wax monotonous, and Rhoda was glad to have some little mental excitement—something which made it necessary for her to bestir herself, and which enabled her to be useful, after her manner, to her kith and kin.

"I shall not speak to her father, yet," she said to herself. "He has strict ideas of propriety, and might be too severe. Madoline must remonstrate with her."

She walked across the smiling fields, light of foot, buoyed up by the pleasing idea that she was performing a Christian duty, that her errand was in all things befitting her double position as near relation and pastor's wife. She felt that if Fate had made her a man she would have been an excellent bishop. All the sterner duties of that high calling—visitations, remonstrances, suspensions—would have come easy to her.

She found Madoline in the morning-room, the French windows wide open, the balcony full of flowers, the tables and mantel-piece and cabinets all abloom with roses.

"Sorry to interrupt your morning practice, dearest," said Mrs. Ferrers as Madoline rose from the piano. "You play those sweet classic bits so deliciously. Mendelssohn, is it not?"

"No; Raff. How early you are, Aunt Rhoda."

"I have something very particular to say to you, Lina, so I came directly I had done with Todd."

This kind of address from a woman of Rhoda's type generally forbodes unpleasantness. Madoline looked alarmed.

"There's nothing wrong, I hope," she faltered.

"Not absolutely—not intentionally wrong, I trust," said Mrs. Ferrers. "But it must be put a stop to immediately."

Madoline turned pale. In the days that were gone Aunt Rhoda had always been a dreadful nuisance to the servants. She had been perpetually making unpleasant discoveries, peculations, dissipations, and carryings-on of divers kinds. Not unfrequently she had stumbled upon mare's-nests, and after making everybody uncomfortable for a week or two, had been constrained to confess herself mistaken. Her rule at South Hill had not been peace. And now Lina feared that, even outside the house, Aunt Rhoda had contrived to make one of her terrible discoveries. Someone had been giving away the milk, or selling the corn, or stealing garden-stuff.

"What is it, Aunt Rhoda?"

Mrs. Ferrers did not give a direct answer. Her cold grey eyes made the circuit of the room, and then she asked:

"Where is Daphne?"

"In her own room—lying down, I think, tired out with rowing."

"And where is Mr. Turchill?"

"Gone home. He had some important business, I believe—a horse to look at."

"Oh, he does go home, sometimes?"

"How curiously you talk, Aunt Rhoda. Is there any harm in his coming here as often as he likes? He is our oldest friend. Papa treats him like a son."

"Oh, no harm, of course, if Vernon is satisfied. But I don't wonder Daphne is tired, and is lying down at mid-day—a horribly lazy, unladylike habit, by the way. Are you aware that she is down at the boat-house before seven every morning?"

"Certainly, aunt. It is much nicer for her to row at that early hour than later in the day. Edgar is teaching her; she is quite safe in his care."

"And do you know that there is a gipsy breakfast every morning in the boat-house?"

"I have heard something about a tea-kettle, and ham-and-eggs. Daphne has an idea that she is learning to cook."

"And do you approve of all this?"

Madoline smiled at the question.

"I like her to be happy. I think she wastes a good deal of time; that she is doing nothing to carry on her education; but idleness is only natural in a girl of her age, and she has been at home such a short time, and she is so fond of the river."

"Has it never occurred to you, Madoline, that there is some impropriety in these tête-à-tête mornings with Edgar Turchill?"

"Impropriety! Impropriety in Daphne being on friendly terms with Edgar—Edgar, who has been brought up with us almost as a brother!"

"With you, perhaps, not with Daphne. She has spent most of her life away from South Hill. She is little more than a stranger to Mr. Turchill."

"She would be very much surprised if you were to tell her so, and so would Edgar. Why, he used always to make himself her playfellow in her holidays, before she went to Madame Tolmache."

"That was all very well while she was in short frocks. But she is now a woman, and people will talk about her."

"About Daphne, my innocent child-like sister, little more than a child in years, quite a child in gaiety and light-heartedness! How can such an idea enter your head, Aunt Rhoda? Surely the most hardened scandalmonger could not find anything to say against Daphne."

"My dear Madoline," began Mrs. Ferrers severely, "you are usually so sensible in all you do and say that I really wonder at the way you are talking this morning. There are certain rules of conduct, established time out of mind, for well-bred young women; and Daphne can no more violate those rules with impunity than anybody else can. It is not because she wears her hair down her back and her petticoats immodestly scanty that she is to go scot-free," added Aunt Rhoda in a little involuntary burst of malevolence.

She had not been fond of Daphne as a child; she liked her much less as a young woman. To a well-preserved woman of forty, who still affects to be young, there is apt to be something aggravating in the wild freshness and unconscious insolence of lovely seventeen.

"Aunt Rhoda, I think you forget that Daphne is my sister—my very dear sister."

"Your half-sister, Madoline. I forget nothing. It is you who forget that there are reasons in Daphne's antecedents why we should be more especially careful about her."

"It is unkind of you to speak of that, aunt," protested Madoline, blushing. "As to Edgar Turchill, he is my father's favourite companion; he is devoted to all of us. There can be no possible harm in his being a kind of adopted brother to Daphne."

"He was an adopted brother to you

three years ago, and we all know what came of it."

"Pshaw! That was a foolish fancy, and is all over and done with."

"The same thing may happen in Daphne's case."

"If it should, would you be sorry? I am sure I should not. I know papa would approve."

"Oh, if Vernon is satisfied with the state of affairs, I can have nothing further to say," replied Mrs. Ferrers with dignity; "but if Daphne were my daughter—and Heaven forbid I should ever have such a responsibility as an overgrown girl of that temperament!—I would allow no boat-house breakfastings, no meanderings on the Avon. However, it is no business of mine," concluded Mrs. Ferrers with an injured air, having said all she had to say. "How is your water-lily counterpane getting on?"

"Nearly finished," answered Madoline, delighted to change the conversation. "It will be ready for papa's birthday."

"How is my brother, by-the-bye?"

"He has been complaining of rheumatic pains. I'm afraid we shall have to spend next winter abroad."

"What nonsense, Lina. It is mere hypochondria on Vernon's part. He was always full of fancies. He is as well as I am."

"He does not think so himself, aunt; and he ought to know best."

"I am not sure of that. A hypochondriac may fancy he has hydrophobia, but he is not obliged to be right. You foster Vernon's imaginary complaints by pretending to believe in them."

Lina did not argue the point, perceiving very plainly that her aunt was out of temper. Nor did she press that lady to stay to luncheon, nor offer any polite impediment to her departure. But the interference of starched propriety had the usual effect. Lightly as Madoline had seemed to hold her aunt's advice, she was too thorough a woman not to act upon it. She went up to Daphne's room directly Mrs. Ferrers left the house. She stole softly in, so as not to disturb the girl's slumber, and seated herself by the open window calmly to await her waking. Daphne's room was one of the prettiest in the house. It had a wide window, overlooking the pastoral valley and winding Avon. It was neatly furnished with birchwood, and turquoise cretonne, and white and gold crockery, but it was sorely out of

order. Daphne's gowns of yesterday and the day before were flung on the sofa. Daphne's hats of all the week round were strewn on tables and chairs. Her sunshade lay across the dressing-table among the brushes, and pomade-pots, and flower-glasses, and pincushions, and trumpery. She had no maid of her own, and her sister's maid, in whose articles of service it was to attend upon her, had renounced that duty as a task impossible of performance. No well-drilled maid could have anything to do—except when positively obliged—with such an untidy and unpunctual young lady. A young lady who would appoint to have her hair dressed and her gown laced at seven, and come running into the house breathless and panting at twenty minutes to eight; a young lady who made hay of her cuffs and collars whenever she was in a hurry, and whose drawer of ribbons was always being upheaved as if by an earthquake. Daphne, being remonstrated with and complained of, protested that she would infinitely rather wait upon herself than be worried.

"You are all goodness, Lina, dear, but half a maid is no maid. I would rather do without one altogether," she said.

The room was not absolutely ugly, even in its disorder. All the things that were scattered about were pretty things. There were a good many ornaments, such as are apt to be accumulated by young ladies with plenty of pocket-money, and very little common sense. Mock Venetian-glass flower vases of every shape and colour; Japanese cups and saucers, and fans and screens; Swiss brackets; willow-pattern plates; a jumble of everything trumpery and fashionable; flowers everywhere, and the atmosphere sickly sweet with the odour of tuberose.

Daphne stirred in her sleep, faintly conscious of a new presence in the room, sighed, turned on her pillow, and presently sat up, flushed and towzled, in her indigo gown, just as she had come in from her boating excursion.

"Have you had a nice nap, dear?"

"Lovely. I was awfully tired. We rowed to Stratford Weir."

"And you are quite able to row now?"

"Edgar says I scull as well as he does."

"Then, dearest, I think you ought to dispense with Edgar in future and keep to our own meadows, as papa said he wished you to do."

"Oh!" said Daphne. "Is that a message from papa?"

"No, dear. But I am sure it will be better for you to consider his wishes upon this point. He is very particular about being obeyed."

"Oh! very well, Lina. Of course if you wish it I will tell Edgar the course of lessons is concluded. He has been awfully good. It will be rather slow without him. But I was beginning to find the breakfasts a weight on my mind. It was so difficult to maintain variety—and Bink has such low ideas. Do you know that he actually suggested sausages—pork-sausages in June! And I could not make him comprehend the nauseaousness of the notion."

"Then it is understood, darling, that you row by yourself in future. I know papa would prefer it."

"You prefer it, Lina; that is enough for me," answered Daphne in her coaxing way. "But I think I ought to give Edgar some little present for all his goodness to me. A smoking-cap, or a cigar-case, or an antimacassar for his mother. I could work it in crewels, don't you know?"

"You never finish anything, Daphne."

"Because the beginning is always so much nicer. But if I should break down in this, you would finish it, wouldn't you, Lina?"

"With pleasure, my pet."

Edgar was told that evening that his services as a teacher of rowing would no longer be required. And though the fact was imparted to him with infinite sweetness, he felt as if half the sunshine were taken out of his life.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

A STOOL.

I OBSERVE that when young ladies deign to accompany papa on a visit to my bachelor abode, they specially affect a certain stool beside my drawing-room fire. Old ladies seldom look at it; men lay their feet on it without a glance, scarcely exclaiming, after a long séance, "What a queer seat! Where did not pick it up?" But girls instinctively appropriate my stool, and in the hollow of its upturned wings they settle themselves cosily. Then they exclaim to papa that he must get a thing like it, and ask where such a funny, dear, delightful object is to be procured. When I tell them it was made in Coomassie, they look blank. To remind them of the Ashanti War confuses but does not enlighten. Most of us who went through that campaign are not yet used to regard ourselves as old.

my bachelor friends of that period—any, yet so reduced!—the pretty girls is year of grace have forgotten your ess, your hardships, your perilous adires. Other heroes they have now, not ess imaginings begotten out of fancy he special correspondent's pen, but live gallants, fresh from Zululand or anistan, who tell their own experiences voce, if they find no subject more rbing. Ulundi and Rorke's Drift, labad, the Peiwar, and Khelat-i-Ghilzai, are words known by heart, whilst aful and Coomassie recall but a vague tion.

y stool rests upon a square flat base, ice rises a hollow column, perforated & to support the top. This is eighteen s long by ten inches broad, ornamented holes neatly cut, and curved upwards ch end like a bow. It is all one solid of cotton-wood, that stately tree found e tropics of both hemispheres. The er is too soft for our purposes, but very quality adapts it to the use of the nt but unlaborious negro. With such sments as his, a lifetime might be spent aping and carving a block like this of harder wood, and it might probably when finished. The ceiba cuts much easily than deal, and has an exquisite ness. It will last, if kept within doors, generation to generation, its pristine eassness maintained by scraping the ce with rough leaves; but the sun has astrous effect. The Ashanti has but nodel for shape, though his varieties of ration are many. Those who have seen retty stool which Sir Garnet presented e Princess of Wales can exactly picture, save the graceful carving and the issé work in silver. That is to say, my y once resembled that historic article. It ne generations since, however, for the ce is yellow and almost polished, and the netrical perforations have been knocked into another. At some distant time rner has been split off, and re-joined titches of copper wire. I would not it supposed that my stool is other a handsome piece of furniture, but comparison it is very dilapidated. it chanced that I brought such an nt relic from Coomassie, when there hundreds new and beautiful about lace, is just the legend I am going to own.

the night of the capture I dined the little mess of gunners. We were I think—Captain Kaite, Lieutenants

Saunders, Knox, and Palmer, and myself, in a small hovel off the market-place. Our equipage was of the simplest and the roughest; our fare Australian beef, shredded out and mixed with rice. During the brief meal the head-executioner of Ashanti paid us a visit, and immediately afterwards a summons came to aid in protecting the place against our camp-followers. It was busy in the streets that night. Barricades had been erected at the chief openings of the town, and their defenders slept heavily beneath them. At every turning blazed an enormous fire, the biggest of all before the general's quarters; it lit the open alcove of the building where Sir Garnet and his staff wrote, smoked, dictated, gave orders, and drank tea in public sight above the throng. Soldiers, hurriedly re-equipped, pressed towards the burning quarter, whence rolled dense clouds of smoke and sheets of flame across the inky sky. The glare shone through and through my tent; the tramp of patrols going out; the fierce discontent of those wearily returning; the complaint of plunderers dragged to justice; and, above all, the wailings of a policeman sentenced to be hung, distracted me for awhile. But one sleeps sound after a victory.

I had engaged myself overnight to accompany Saunders in a thorough exploration of the town. After coffee at daybreak, we visited the aristocratic quarter destroyed by our Kroomen and camp-followers the night before. Many curious and valuable things remained in that labyrinth of neat huts and small court-yards leading one into another. The heavy-thatched roofs which made such a blaze had mostly fallen without grave damage to the buildings. Thence we entered the palace, and surveyed that extraordinary show of barbaric wealth and barbarous cruelty. Enough has been said of its contents, from the renowned umbrella and the golden pipes to the range of stools coated an inch thick with human blood as with glue. But to the last day of my existence I shall regret those tables of carved ebony, one adorned with plaques of gold, one with alternate plaques of gold and silver. I had carriers returning empty-handed who might have borne them away with a quantity of treasures which were blown up and burnt.

Two hours in the palace carried us to breakfast-time and duty. In the afternoon we strolled another way, beyond the inner line of pickets. Here also the streets were broad and smooth, lined with houses much

bigger, and, in many cases, even more elaborate of decoration on the outside. One after another we entered them, traversed their empty courts, and examined their forsaken chambers. In this quarter, scarcely touched by plunderers, everything remained as the owner had left it on his hasty flight. Cloths and silks lay on the floor, arms and skins hung upon the walls, sacks of clothing, brass lamps and basins, chairs, beads, and ornaments were strewn around. Often were we tempted by some quaint and interesting object, and the struggle of resistance forbade us to show mercy when we caught two Fantees looting. These scoundrels had chosen a house very large and highly ornamental; its outer wall bore the representation of a battle in stucco, highly polished, and stained with Venetian red. They knew the likely hiding-places, which we did not; and a curious assortment of valuables they had brought together. A large bag was filled with native silks, worth, as it afterwards proved, some sixty pounds at the coast. Upon the floor lay sandals, adorned with little lumps of gold, weighing, probably, an ounce apiece. A Brummagem musket was cased in silver, and a pouch-belt of leopard-skin, fitted with silver-handled knives, priming-flask, and fetish-bag, lay beside it. But the article of loot which dwells especially in my recollection was a pile of stools, all snowy white and beautifully carved. They were five or six in number, and the two lowest, which had silver mountings, were nearly as handsome as that given to the Princess of Wales. Whether they had been so arranged by the owner, or by the Fantee plunderers, we did not ascertain. Leaving all this wealth, we led our prisoners to the provost-marshal, whose dealings with them I never learned.

In the night my tent was flooded by a deluge of rain, and I crept miserably into a hammock, whence nothing could stir me till the last instant. By seven o'clock the main body of our troops had started on its homeward march, and the rear-guard stood waiting for the destruction of the palace. I resolved to bring away one silver stool at least for a trophy, and ran towards the house mentioned, Yarbrow, my head servant, after me. The Kroomen stood at every corner, with torch in one hand, matches in the other. A superior officer called after me as I passed, and reluctantly I commissioned my stupid "boy" to find and bring in the loot. Yarbrow seemed to com-

prehend, and set off at score, for the distance was not trifling. In a quarter of an hour he returned, with one handsome white stool, not silver-bound, and the ancient piece of furniture I have described. In great anger and disappointment I flung the things at him. But a dull boom, a rush of smoke above the trees, told us that the palace was destroyed. "Fall in, there! Fall in!" officers cried. Gleeful at a chance of mischief, the Kroomen lit their torches, and rushed up the street, firing the thatch wherever it was dry. I picked up my stools and threw them into a hammock.

At the first camp I asked Yarbrow why he had not brought me a silver-mounted stool, and why he had mocked me with such a rubbishy old thing as that I sat on. He replied, first, that he had found no silver-mounted article; and second, that he thought the rubbishy old thing was what I wanted.

"Why—why—why?" I cried with increasing rage. But Yarbrow's English, not strong at any time, vanished before a sign of anger. His eyes rolled timorously, and words came without connection. I made out that the stool was a great fetish, worth incalculable amounts in luck, if not redeemable for money. Nothing further could be gathered, and I dismissed him with resignation.

At Cape Coast Castle he entered my bedroom one morning, and hung about as a man does who wants to talk. On my questioning him, he answered: "Ashanti man come. He want trade, sir." I was pleased to hear this, for nobody had expected that the beaten enemy would so soon recover from his sulks. But the matter did not interest one who is not so fortunate as to be connected with any kind of trade. I said as much, and left Yarbrow to his household duties. At her appearance in the breakfast-room, my kind hostess eagerly addressed me:

"Did you understand what Yarbrow meant, Mr. B——? He says that two Ashantis brought a quantity of gold-dust to exchange for your old stool, and that you refused their offer."

"Gold-dust for my old stool? Oh, this deception is worse than the first! Pray send for him."

Yarbrow came, and volubly declared in Fantee that such and no other was the message he had given me. It was no time to correct misunderstandings. "Fly!" I cried. "Catch them Ashanti one time!"

he was too late. The messengers had back disappointed, fearful to linger against that hostile population. Very I was when all hope vanished, but could scarcely blame Yarbro. He, it appears, recognised the house to which I pointed him, perceived the grand fetish in a corner, and doubted not that I wished to see it. The visit of the Ashantis did not rise him, nor did my refusal. The ascendant white man doubtless understood what he was doing, and scorned to change his luck for money.

When all hope of catching the deer was lost, I asked Mrs. — what incident signified. "That I cannot exactly," she replied. "Your stool belonged to Quoi Afrim, the favourite of Sai Tooti, who founded the present kingdom."

Ah, the venerable object does not look as if it was made yesterday! And what Quoi Afrim do with it?"

There you ask too much of my folk.

His name is familiar on the coast, I have heard it since I was a child. I will ask Yarbro if you like."

He said, "By all means!" and my luck-follower arrived. Standing before us on the verandah, he told his legend, and the lady translated it with spirit. Of course, the Fantee had no dates, and very little geography. I could correct him at any time, but my African learning is all forgotten, nor have I books for reference. As far as memory serves, the events narrated took place about 1720 A.D., in the reign of the Akims. But I guarantee more than the simplest facts.

The Ashantis were slaves of Deukera, a kingdom which they have reduced to a geographical expression. So utterly oppressed and broken were they, that the Ashanti monarch exercised on them his worst freaks of tyranny such as he did dare impose on other tributaries. As I understand it, the Ashantis had never been independent at this time, and they were scarcely a nation. Sai Tooti, the great hero, was son of an evil-minded cabocceer, who in a small way retaliated on the people the miseries and insults he himself suffered from the men of Deukera. Father and son did not agree at all. Sai Tooti employed himself in hunting with his dog Quoi Afrim, the heir of a chieftain who lived near by. In his house Sai Tooti spent the time not occupied in the jungle, and gave a rare visit to his mother, for whom he had a passionate affection. Quoi Afrim

had a sister, with whom his friend naturally fell in love. I do not know whether the feeling was mutual, or whether it was even declared. But one day the wicked cabocceer perceived that he had room for another wife, and he cast his eyes upon this girl, unknowing, one may believe, that his son fancied her. The young men came from hunting to find the marriage festivities in progress. It was too late to interfere, if interference would have availed, and they fled with their sorrow to the woods. Some months afterwards the Gesler of Deukera imagined that crowning atrocity which cost him his life, gave his kingdom to Sai Tooti, and launched the Ashanti people on that career which we stopped for awhile, but did not block. He ordered that every cabocceer should surrender his first wife to soldiers despatched for the collection of this new tribute. The affection of mother and son is always powerful with negroes, and I have mentioned that Sai Tooti had an extreme tenderness for his parent. He heard the news in the bush, and hastened home, not yet with any thoughts of a resistance, which seemed hopeless, but resolved to save his mother by stratagem. The only chance of escape lay in persuading the cabocceer to sacrifice his new bride, and this was but one degree less cruel to the lover's feelings. But the uxorious old man refused, and whilst the argument was warmest the soldiers of Deukera arrived. They numbered six, and their conduct probably was offensive. Father and son had already come almost to blows, when the wailing of women in the court roused Sai Tooti to ungovernable passion. He rushed out, followed by his friend, and attacked the Deukerans. The old cabocceer and others took their part, whilst a number of villagers joined their assailants. In the end the soldiers were all slain, and the chief among them; but the founder of Coomassie was never charged with parricide.

This incident caused the rising of the Ashantis, wherein Sai Tooti naturally took the lead. Deukera was overthrown and enslaved. It rose to semi-independence afterwards, till the finding of that grand nugget, which Lord Gifford so narrowly missed taking caused its annihilation—for the king would not give it up, nor could he keep it, and so he was swept away.

There is no doubt that Sai Tooti, like the Zulu Chaka, was a master-man. He transformed the people of serfs, whose name was a by-word for cowardice and degradation; led them, unused to arms and

the practice of war, from victory to victory; and before his thirtieth birthday had established an empire that stretched from the Kong Mountains to the Prah, and from Dahomey to Mandingo land.

Touching the fate of his early love, history is silent, but Quoi Afrim was his sovereign's right hand. After years of fighting, always victorious, defeat came, and death with it. The Ashanti monarch invaded Akim, fought a successful battle, and received submission from the chiefs. They bound themselves by the most solemn oaths to be his liegemen, to serve him in war, and to pay tribute. Sai Tooti, who was ill, accepted these terms, and, after a time, went forward to new conquests. But the treacherous Akims perceived that the victor, over confident, travelled an hour's march behind the army, with an escort of two thousand men. The booty to be gained was enormous, the risk of failure slight. It might reasonably be expected that an empire so hastily created and so incongruous would drop to pieces at the overthrow of its founder. The Akims resolved to hazard a bold stroke, and they assembled secretly in the woods behind the ford of Cormantin—a spot unvisited as yet by Europeans, but not to be confused with the town of that name on the sea-shore. It lies upon the Bossum Prah. Everything went as the conspirators desired. The main army crossed without suspicion, and after a while the body-guard came up. There was as many slaves as fighting-men in that gorgeous retinue. Sai Tooti himself, with a hundred women, travelled in silken litters plated with gold. Every great caboceer had his harem. The advance-guard crossed the river, and then, at a signal given, the Akim chiefs in attendance suddenly escaped. Forthwith, an overpowering number of the enemy attacked the long line in silence. From either side they rushed, sprang out of holes, dropped from the trees. Skilled marksmen transixed the horn-blowers, and snatched away the instrument which might have given an alarm. The vanguard re-plunged into the stream, but never gained the hither bank. Those in rear, dashing forward to protect their king, entangled themselves amongst screaming women, litters overturned, and slaves escaping. But a circle formed about the monarch, and here the fight was desperate as hopeless. Quoi Afrim saw that all was lost unless help came. His sons were the fleetest of the army, and they

stood beside him. At a word the three youths fought their passage through the struggling crowd and fell upon the enemy. Two gained the bank; one only climbed the other slope, with the Akims behind him. While the devoted guard fought breast to breast with the enemy, this boy ran for his king's life and his father's. Wounded, fainting, he sped through the trees. At length a little group of stragglers appeared ahead, and then only did he raise his voice. "Turn, men of Ashanti! Your king is waylaid!" They ran back, and he flew on. The footsore and the sick regained their strength, and as they turned the cry rang forward: "Our king is waylaid! Help!" From mouth to mouth it passed like the wind. The track filled with soldiers hurrying madly to the rescue. Shouting his desperate news, the youth struggled through them, until he saw the umbrellas of the chiefs commanding the vanguard borne towards him. Then he knew the alarm was given and set off back. The host returned in one solid body, without order or array. It surged along the path, burst through the river lined with foes, and cut a passage to the fatal spot. The foremost saw Quoi Afrim still upright, surrounded by a crowd of enemies. Whilst they looked, he fell upon the body of his dead master, saved at least from insult. The son bent over him. "If you die," he cried, "your stool shall be yearly washed in the blood of a hundred Akim slaves for ever!"—as is the custom.

The hero whispered: "Not mine! Give all to the king!" and so died. Thus it happens that Quoi Afrim's stool was not plastered with the blood of generations, like those others which we saw in Coomassie.

The fight was long and desperate. In the end the Akims retired with vast plunder, and the Ashantis withdrew to their own country. The flower of the nobility had perished. But the spirit of Sai Tooti survived, and the massacre of that day was awfully avenged. It has not been forgotten, however. Meminda Cormantin, Cormantin Saturday, is still the strongest and most fatal oath by which an Ashanti swears. If a man broke that the earth would quake. When the slave or the prisoner is seized, and the knife is at his throat, if he can but shriek those syllables, he is preserved. For this reason it is that the Ashanti's first action is to thrust a knife through the victim's jaws, paralysing or transfixing his tongue.

at is the legend attached to my stool. I presented the white and handsome one to the Mayor of Liverpool for his renowned position.

Y LITTLE TOUR IN WALES.

PART IV.

"THANK YOU. I never drink beer," of course not. Who but Mr. Edwardus Smith would ever think of associating two such incongruous ideas as beer and Adolphus Styffecote?

Mr. Smith is quite unabashed. He discovered at a little public-house just at the end of the bridge, what he called a wonderful tap of home-brewed, and was proud of his discovery as if it were a comet or a comet at the very least. He was, indeed, so eloquent about it, that I sarcastically suggest his resigning at Llangollen and devoting himself to their yet further appreciation.

We are on the move. Adolphus and the attenahms—the old birds, that is—are on to Corwen by train and see about it, whilst the rest of the party, with the exception of Woffles, who is accommodated on a donkey, walk. We are already on our road when the audacious proposition is made, and the two gentlemen are escorted for the first mile or so of the way, promising to return to their own breakfast when they have seen us safely beyond the

Fancy Adolphus drinking beer at breakfast in the bar of a country public-house!

Really, when one comes to think of it, it is quite time to adopt some more rational mode of procedure than has characterised us of late on for the last few days. The amount of nonsense that has been talked, the monstrous twists that have been given to the well-honoured traditions and inscriptions, the tragedies that have been committed on historical and poetical and legendary society, have been enough to make a man of sense, and Brorhmail Ysgythog, and the old ap Eiwion Lygliw, and Madog ap Idd Maelw, turn in their graves. We proceed sensibly to-day, and set a good example to Edith, to say nothing of that egghead slip of a Tattenham girl, with whom she has sworn the eternal friendship in the schoolroom.

It is that they benefit by it in the highest degree. I don't know that there is any very remarkable echo anywhere along the road between Llangollen and Corwen, but if there be, there will certainly be as

little fear of passing it by unrecognised with those two in company, as there is hope of hearing it repeat anything worth hearing. Whether they or Woffles or Mr. Smith are the wildest or the most uproarious, or get through the largest amount of nonsense, or perform the most absurd vagaries in the course of the day, I am not a sufficient expert in lunacy to determine. But Emma and I walk soberly, as reasonable people should do, taking an intelligent interest in the beautiful scenery and the various points of interest that open one after the other; as we now ascend a steep reach of hill commanding the whole stretch of the lovely valley once the property of the great Owen Glendower, or Owain Glyndwr as our little guide-book piques itself on correctly misspelling him; now dip down again almost to the brink of the dashing Dee, with just a peep of the rushing clear brown stream flinging up its jets of foam between the dipping boughs and over the glistening green and golden leaves; whilst away in the distance the great range of the Berwyn Hills rise, now clear and bare and rugged, now draped in floating mist-wreaths, now shimmering softly in the blue transparent haze of the hot bright noon.

I think the distance must be wrongly stated in our little guide-book—at least, the five miles allotted to the road from Llangollen to Glyndyfrdwy certainly appear much longer than any ordinary measurement. Mr. Smith suggests that the fatigue I experience arises not from my exertions in reaching the place, but from my heroic but entirely unsuccessful efforts at pronouncing it. But that is simply an impertinence to which, however Emma may think it polite to force a laugh in reply, I do not condescend to pay the smallest attention; and after a short rest and a glass of milk—not goat's milk, as we have been fondly hoping, but unromantic extract of the common cow of everyday life—we set forth upon our march again, Mr. Smith diversifying the procedure by jumping leap-frogwise on to the crupper of Woffles's donkey, where he challenges Edith and her ally to a race to the next milestone, and disappears in a whirlwind of kicks, plunges, dust, and laughter, to be seen no more till we find him a couple of hours later with a carrot in one hand and an apple in the other, earnestly endeavouring to beguile his four-legged brother into the front-door of the hotel.

Meanwhile Emma and I plod sturdily

and sensibly on, past the clump of firs that marks the watch-tower of that vanished residence of the great Glyndwr, which according, as our guide-book informs us, to the poet Islw Coch—whoever he may have been—was equal in extent to Westminster Abbey; past the little village of Llansaint-fraid, head-quarters of the pleasant stretch of clear brown stream with “here and there a lusty trout, and here and there a grayling;” past the Carchar Owain Glyndwr, or “Owen Glendower’s prison” (with regard to which, after much study of my local guide-book, and a long exhaustive explanation in an altogether unknown tongue from an ancient dame in marvellous black straw hat, tied down over a voluminous white nightcap, I confess to not having even now the faintest idea whether it was the place where the great Owen was locked up himself or that in which he locked up other people). And so at last to Corwen, where, as I have said, we find Mr. Edward Emilius Smith. The rest of the party have gone on, for it seems that the hotel is full, and our party have to be distributed among various neat little stone-built cottages, in the clean and lavender-smelling best bed-room of one of which I presently find myself installed, not at all sorry for a rest after a tramp which our guide-book persists in setting down as ten miles, but which I am quite certain, lovely and instructive as it has been, cannot have been less than fifteen at the very shortest.

It is not till I have taken off my boots, and am startled by finding my feet upon what is certainly not an ordinary bed-room carpet, that I discover what it is about my new apartment which has half-unconsciously struck me with a vague sense of oddity. Then it suddenly dawns upon me that never before have I seen a room so thoroughly swaddled up. The pleasant little surprise for my bare soles has been prepared by stretching over the trimly-swept but venerable carpet long strips of equally trim and equally venerable oil-cloth, “the united ages” of the two, as they say in the newspaper accounts of pauper feasts and posterous marriages, being, I should think, at least half a century. The bed has the usual allowance of blankets and counterpane, but it is covered by a faded patchwork quilt of yet more venerable date. The frame of the little chimney-glass in which I catch, in the intervals between blue vases and green shepherdesses, playfully distorted glimpses of an unknown countenance with a complexion happily

balanced between the two, is carefully swathed in yellow muslin. The narrow wooden frames of the Woodman and his Dog and the Cotter’s Saturday Night have each their casing of elaborately-cut brown tissue paper. The spindly old washhand-stand, from which the vigorous use of the diurnal scrubbing-brush has long since removed every vestige of paint, is oil-clothed like the carpet. But the great feature of the room is its antimacassars. They are upon chair and upon bed-post, upon toilette-table and window-sill, upon the back of the bath and the front of the mantel-piece. The bell-rope had a tassel once, no doubt, possibly a handsome one. It is gone; but the diminutive antimacassar which once shrouded it is still in its place, coming off in your hands at your first attempt to ring the bell. The very pincushion, besides its own clear muslin cover elaborately brodered with the name of Maryanne, is yet further protected by a sampler neatly worked in green silk upon an open ground with the following no doubt moral, but certainly mysterious motto:

Lost,
Between the hours of sunrise and sunset,
Two Golden Hours.
Each set with sixty diamond minutes.
No reward is offered, as they are
Lost for ever.

I never did work a sampler myself, but I should think that two hours, golden or otherwise, must have been about the time that this ingenious piece of needlework must have taken in the execution.

Is Corwen rather a dull little place? Sir Theophilus, who was here a dozen years or so back, has a lively remembrance of it as the starting point of one of the smartest four-horse coaches at that time extant in the three kingdoms, running through the very cream and pink of North Welsh scenery, by way of Cerrigy Druidion, up over the wild upland of Pentre Voelas, then deep down into the narrow glen, where Bettws y Coed snuggles in among the big trees and the thick green bushes that throw their cool shade over the clear brown ripples of the young Conway, as it sweeps on to Danrwst, and Llandudno and the sea; and then up again over such a road as is not often to be found even in wealthy England, a road on any dozen feet of which, could you only cut the section out and lay it deftly on four even legs, instead of planting it against a steep hill-side, you might make cannons and hazards and spot-strokes with as much certainty as on the finest slate-bed

table ever had; up over Capel and down again through the wild rocky Llanberis Pass. But while the pleasant ge-coach has been taking a new lease on the Sassenach side of the Dee, up to the foot of the romantic Berwyns under the very shadow of Moel Liabod the Father Snowdon himself, the last coaches has run itself fairly off the end the merry sound of the horn is only in announcement of the weary nettle, with its solitary pair of offshoots, which once a week wends its holy way to the half-way house at Llan-y-Coed, and forthwith loses heart ends its melancholy way back again. Tomorrow happens to be Tuesday, the day of the hebdomadal excursion, and we hold a council over the great question, to go or to go. Deciding promptly that if we sit in two long rows, knocking each other's knees and staring into each other's eyes, it will be at once easier and less expensive to cashier the dining-table and push the chairs together in the saloon. To say nothing of the consciences of Emma and I, who have each for the last dozen years subscribed their annual guinea to that little society in Jermyn Street, which is really on the whole, perhaps, originated the encouragement in mountainous excursions of large excursion parties in pair-raggonettes.

Very well—that is to say, Emma and I—have a quiet day with our sketch-books in the little nook by the brown Alwen, where, after its headlong rush down the steep above Pentre Voelas, seems trying to set itself a little, and assume a tardy pace before joining its feudal chief, the George has got his “trout ticket,” and is up to his knees in the stream, fully occupied in landing such a basket as may have a handsome profit on the investment and floundering every now and then in the pool after a manner which elicits from poor Emma a little shriek of dismay. Now, I should think, considerably diverting the attention of the speckled gentleman of whom he is in pursuit from the business of the red spinners, and whirling and darting at a fair proportion of the length of the rainbow, with which he reserves his line every time a fresh cast of the line is left dangling among the branches and ad. Adolphus and Sir Theophilus taken time by the forelock, and are waiting at Bala for our reception tomorrow, returning in due time for table.

As for the girls and Mr. Edward

Emilius Smith, they are off, of course, upon some wild scramble among the hills, and if Woffles and her donkey, who at Mr. Smith's earnest entreaty have been allowed to accompany them, ever come back in a distinguishable condition—— But Emma's nerves are delicate, and George's aquatic vagaries are quite sufficient trial to them for the time.

And by-and-by Woffles and her escort do appear. At least, I suppose this little imp with the purple-stained face and hands and the fragmentary frock, and the once natty black boots and speckless socks now modulated into a green and yellow arrangement in clay and duck-weed, is, if not Woffles herself, very much like what Woffles might be expected to become under present auspices. The hat, at all events, is Woffles's hat, though at present its normal position is usurped by a fantastic wreath of woodbine and belladonna, whilst the hat itself hangs rakishly over one eye of the philosophic donkey. And the attendants march beside singing melodiously, and——

And before we have recovered sufficient breath to express our sense of these insane proceedings—Whoosh!—a gliding monster eight feet high comes whirling past within an inch of my elbow, and my little shriek of terror is answered by a chuckle of satisfaction at the “scare” to which I have been a victim, and the next moment a huge wheel rolls pensively into the ditch, and that unquenchable young civil-engineer is bringing one of the Wolverhampton gentlemen, by what he eloquently terms the scruff of his neck, to apologise abjectly for his misdeeds.

So fate and Mr. Edward Emilius have it their own way, and when on our arrival next morning at the Bala station, that irrepressible young gentleman produces the new little local guide, of which by some mysterious means he has already possessed himself, and solemnly impresses upon us the necessity of taking its advice and at once proceeding to investigate the magnificent view to be obtained from the wooden bridge across the railway, poor Emma is left once more to matronise with Lady Tattenham in the little hotel omnibus, and I abandon all claim to be regarded as a rational being for the remainder at all events of my little tour in Wales.

Less than five minutes takes us to the goal of our present ambition, and the first conclusion to which its achievement conducts us is that the editor of our new local guide-book is a wag. The view is a fine

view, no doubt, quite as fine as we could have obtained by remaining quietly on the platform of the station. We see the lake, and the town, which no doubt "from the number of spires visible might be mistaken for a cathedral city" quite as easily as any other town which is obviously without a cathedral. And we see that somewhat oddly assorted collection of "most prominent features in the landscape," the Calvinistic Methodist College, and the residence of R. J. Ll. Price, Esq., and the Arenig Mountains. And then we refer once more to the pages of our monitor, who goes on dryly to observe that, "by the time the visitor will have been satisfied, the omnibuses will have left the station." Wherein our monitor is perfectly correct. It has not taken many minutes to satisfy us that the view of the Calvinistic Methodist College, and the residence of R. J. Ll. Price, Esq., and the Arenig Mountains may be seen to quite as good advantage from the summit of the 'bus as from the summit of the bridge. But our monitor's little practical jest has met with the most complete success. The omnibuses are gone. So we take his advice once more and toddle after them.

And a very pleasant fortnight we have at Bala, and very thoroughly do we "do," after our harum-scarum, irresponsible fashion, the numerous quaint and interesting and picturesque beauties of this lovely little lake and pleasant district round about. Now we munch our sandwiches under the shadow of the rugged heights that frown down upon the deep translucent waters of Llyn Arenig. Now we make a melting pilgrimage to the floating island of Llyn Mynyllod, traditionally gifted with the power of predicting by its various changes of position the coming changes of "the market." Next day we are examining with more than Trojan interest the famous wooden charger of Llandderfel, whereon, as tradition hath it, when Gaffer Will was too severely disciplined by Gammer Ali, some faithful bachelor friend of hen-pecked William would ride from public to public throughout the village, reciting at each some such awesome "rhigwm" as this :

GOFFYNIAD.—Am bwy'r wyt ti'n marchogaeth.

ATEB.—Am ddguddyn o'r gym'dogaeth.

GOFFYNIAD.—Pwy yw rheiny Gymro?

ATEB.—Will ac Ali Beuno.

GOFFYNIAD.—Ydyw Ali'n curo'n arw?

ATEB.—Mae hi bron a'i ladd e'n farw.

Rhwng y ferch a hithau

Mae'i gwr yn las o'i gleislan.

Which being freely translated runneth roughly thus :

QUESTION.—For whom pray do you ride?

ANSWER.—For two of our country-side.

QUESTION.—And who may these good Cymry be?

ANSWER.—William and Ali Brown d'ye see.

QUESTION.—Does Ali thump her husband, truly?

ANSWER.—Almost to death. They use him cruelly, She and her daughter. Between the two Poor William's skin's all black and blue.

This peace-making charger used to be kept in the church, so his parade would seem to have been in some sort a religious function.

Then we return to the lakes again. There is a perfect family of them around here; none of them particularly big; some what we in unromantic England should be apt to call ponds; but each with its own special characteristic, and all with quite enough of beauty to form a very sufficient objective for a day's holiday-making. Llyn Creini we do not trouble. It is a favourite place for perch, our local monitor tells us; but then so are Llyn Arenig, Llyn Celyn, and the great Llyn Tegid or Lake of Bala itself. Indeed, our local monitor seems to have perch upon the brain, even urging their pursuit upon the unpiscatorially disposed traveller, by assuring him that "minnows are considered the best bait for perch—they are not hard to catch." Though whether, as Mr. Edward Emilius observes, the promised facility extends to the captivation of the perch itself, or only to the preliminary annexation of the minnow, is not quite so clear as an ardent thirster after perch might perhaps desire. It may be a defect in our education, but we do not personally care about perch, and as the scenery about Llyn Creini must be very much like that round Llyn Mynyllod, about a couple of "crow" miles off, we determine to shirk that portion of a conscientious tourist's duty, and make our next excursion among the wild rocks and purple and crimson heather of Llyn Arenig Bach.

Something like an excursion this, eight good miles there, and another eight—Mr. Edward Emilius insists upon it that it is the same eight, but that is pure perverseness and impertinence—another eight back. And if they are not exactly mountain miles, there is quite enough of what our civil-engineer professionally styles gradient about them, to give one a very good idea next morning of how many ankles go to make a pair. So we take an off day in Fachddellioeg Wood, and potter about under great spreading trees, and among brilliant moss-covered rocks, and by tiny pools and baby streamlets, clear and cool and sweet, and altogether laugh to scorn our local monitor's assurance of the ample repayment afforded by the view from the

nit of Fachddeiliog Hill, or any other "for the trouble of ascending it." h and Jenny Tattenham are quite ready he climb, of course; and George— has laid in a fresh stock of flies to ce those left on the branches along banks of the Alwel at Corwen, and is o the hills on the strength of some ally "straight tip" touching a certain where the trout swim about ready ed with hooks in their mouths, crying me, catch me"—openly declares that, if going to cave in after that little spell es not think much of my form. By h George doesn't mean my figure, but powers of pedestrianism. I do not a bit ashamed of myself, however, for and Emilius is just as tired as I am, after such a day's work as yesterday, diet morning in the woods is really htful. At least, I find it so.

id so by the next morning we are in for the ascent of Arenig, a real moun-two thousand eight hundred feet high, with rocks and precipices not quite, ups, upon the orthodox Alpine scale, big and wild enough for our unsoc-icated appreciation. Edward Emilius, knows Switzerland, as he says, by, and talks familiarly—though that, ie way, is not saying much, for I am l Edward Emilius would talk familiarly ie ghosts of his ancestors—of Grimsel, Görnergrat, and Scheideck, the very s of which convey to homekeeping folk me a reverential sense of travel and nture, stoutly maintains that in some cts our little pocket edition of a tain district has what he calls a led pull, and that such purples and s as steep the sunken glens, such soft s and melting crimsons as steal slowly the heathery summits, are not to be had at drier, rarer, more vivid atmosphere. id certainly a lovelier view than that

Arenig, as the sunlight glitters upon fifteen tiny lakes nestled here and there ig the surrounding hills, and tracks threads of silver the winding course of and Tryweryn, Hirnant and Alwel, and Llafor, and lights up into burn-rimmon the glowing masses of heather he nearer summits, cooling down ally range by range to the soft air- of the distant hills by Snowdon, or, or Cader Idris, I at least shall be antly disappointed to find even under hadow of the queenly Jungfrau or the ty Mont Blanc. As for crevasses and pices, arêtes and walls of ice, and all

that sort of thing, if you really want to break your neck you can do it as well down a couple of hundred feet as down a couple of thousand, and with infinitely less trouble and expense.

And so we work our way by mountain and lake, and church and camp—there are two "ancient encampments" within easy picnic distance, as well as two tumuli, full, no doubt, of the bones of equally ancient Britons, and one of them glorified for ever by Spenser as the residence of old Timon, tutor and foster-father of Arthur—till the orthodox Bala programme has been conscientiously gone through, and our last day by Llyn Tegid is set down for a sailing trip on the lake itself.

And a pleasant, lazy, lounging day we make of it. According to our local monitor there is a gold mine at Llannuwchllyn, with a regular quartz-crushing apparatus, worked by a wondrous wheel, fifty feet high, and yielding half a pound of gold to every ton. But we are idly disposed this morning, without a morsel of enterprise among us, and much more disposed to profit at second-hand by Edward Emilius's graphic stories of the real gold diggings of California, whither it appears he accompanied his father, the great Sir Emilius, a couple of years ago, on one of that cosmopolitan gentleman's little prospecting excursions, than to investigate the mysteries of pay-dirt and panning-out and pile-making for ourselves. So Castell Carn Dorchan is voted "altogether out of it," and Cutthroat Canon, and the Great Gooseflesh Gulch, and the Red Noses' Raid on Phil Arrah-beaisy-now's Ranch, are the order of the day.

Very wonderful stories they are, and wonderfully well does Mr. Edward Emilius tell them. With an air of conviction too, which, but for the remembrance of Dinas Bran, might almost lead one to accept them as true. And he adapts them so neatly to present surroundings. Just such another lake as this it was, only, perhaps, eight or ten miles long instead of four, by which they and Mr. Joshua G. Grippus, and the One-eyed Ranchero, Juarez, were camped that night when the two bears came down, as it might be, from the hill over Llangower yonder, and stampeded all the cattle just as they were within a day's journey of the great Rat River Reef, for the first claims on which they and Phil the Scalper and his crowd had been racing against each other night and day ever since Go-Bang, the pigeon-toed Celestial, let out the secret in his cups at the station on the

Stony Sierra, where Sir Emilius was triangulating for his new Pacific Junction Railway. That white house with the big wall round it and the big trees beyond was the very image, if you took off the upper storey and just altered the roof and windows a bit, you know, of the ranch on the San José, where they found the proprietor with his ears nailed to his own door-post, and a couple of dozen Indian arrows sticking out of him, like St. Sebastian in a picture-gallery. That big fellow yonder—Yr Arran, is it?—stands just like Four-finger Peak, where the party of Flatfeet, that had been stalking us, as we afterwards found, for a fortnight or more, came sneaking round as it might be over the ridge yonder, and— And so forth, and so forth, each story deftly linked on to some feature of the scenery around us, and each more startling, or awful, or ludicrous than the other.

All which to hear does Desdemona, as represented by Emma, and Adolphus, and the four Tattenhams, and Miss T.'s young man, and your humble servant, and Woffles—yes, most particularly Woffles—seriously incline. And time flies fast. We have just finished the most exciting tale of all, in which Jem, the faithful nigger, crawls from our watch-fire at hazard of his life, and cutting the painter of the canoe in which half a score of treacherous Indians lie concealed with the polite design of tomahawking us all when their peace-pretending chief shall have lulled us and our suspicions to sleep, launches the canoe into mid-stream, and dances a grotesque fandango of delight over his exploit; when, to our astonishment, we find that it is high time to land and boil our gipsy-kettle for tea. The wind gives signs of rising too, and though it is dead off shore the lake soon rises, and there is no time to waste. I have still a touch or two to put to my sketch of Arenig, and am working diligently that I may join the rest before the kettle boils, when somehow the mountain seems to be shifting its place. Then suddenly a small shrill whoop comes from the shore behind me, and, jumping to my feet, I see—Woffles, executing a triumphant war-dance, and find myself floating gently out to sea before the rising breeze.

RUSSIAN VILLAGE SCHOOLS.

In a hollow behind a hill lies the silent Russian village, buried beneath mountains of snow for four or five months in the year. It consists of one wide street, with twenty,

thirty, or forty wooden huts built at irregular intervals to right and left. They are too miserable looking, one would think, even for cattle to take shelter in, and their tiny windows are covered with fretted frost, or weep frosty tears that soon turn into an icy fringe. Sometimes not a trace of the street is to be seen; the snow has reached the roofs. It may well be asked, is there a school here, and is daily school-going possible? The affirmative answer is startling and unexpected. Winter is the only season of the year during which the peasant's child can go to school. The teacher is hired only for the winter months, and in spring, summer, and autumn, the schools are closed.

Russian village schools may be classed under two heads: the Zemstvo Free School and the Samorodney or People's School. The former were first opened some thirteen years ago under government auspices, and their expenses are defrayed by rates collected from gentlemen, land-owners, and rural communes; although receiving no grant from government, they are under government supervision, and are visited at stated intervals by government inspectors. The course of study laid down for them by the Minister of Public Instruction is reading, writing, the first two rules of arithmetic, and short religious stories, extracted from the early history of the Greek Church. None of the most elementary ideas of geography, or of national or natural history, are included. The teacher is badly paid, badly housed, and Russian distances and the Russian climate cut him off from the civilised world. These Zemstvo Schools are still very few and far between. There is only one for every hundred versts or so—that is to say, one for many thousands of children of both sexes. A Russian recruit with a certificate testifying to his having passed the three class examinations of the Zemstvo Free School has the privilege of serving four years in the Russian army, instead of the compulsory six years, but, notwithstanding this privilege, they are often badly attended. In the government of Iver, for instance, one hundred and nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety roubles were spent last year on Zemstvo Schools, and yet according to government statistics more than ten thousand children belonging to the local population never frequented them.

The Samorodney or People's Schools are kept by the peasants themselves, are free from government control, and their existence dates back to a very lengthened period.

They are open in winter, close in early spring, and the teachers engaged are sacristans, choristers, retired soldiers, peasant lads (pupils of the Zemstvo Free Schools), and profeernayas, or women attached to Russian churches to bake the sacramental bread. The number of pupils in each Samorodney School varies from ten to thirty, and the teachers' terms vary also according to circumstances. A profeernaya who keeps school in her own hut receives sixty kopecks for teaching a child the thirty-six letters of the Russian alphabet, sixty more when he can read one or two prayers, seventy or eighty kopecks when he can read the psalms. For teaching him to write she charges one rouble, and with that his education ends; arithmetic is here an unknown luxury. The whole course of study, lasting two, or at the most three winters, costs twelve roubles for each child, a little more than a guinea (a sum which includes any outlay there may have been for books, pens, ink, paper), as well as sundry presents of milk, eggs, and vatrooshkies, or Russian home-made cakes, to the profeernaya school-mistress. But it often happens that the teacher chosen is a newcomer, and owns no house in the village. In that case a small empty izba is hired, for three or four roubles a winter, and each scholar is to supply fuel, and heat the earthen stove, in turn. Two roughly made tables are placed in the house. The children are divided into two classes, the readers and the writers, the former again been divided into alphabeters and psalmsters. They come to school at seven in the morning, leave at eight in the evening, and, during the course of the day, are only allowed an hour and a half for dinner and rest. The established punishment is beating with birch-rods: fifteen strokes for ordinary misdemeanours, and twenty-five or thirty for extraordinary ones. Towards spring, as may be expected, many of the young faces are pale and wrinkled, reminding one of little men grown old before their time. In some places the peasants are too poor to hire even the above-mentioned izba school, and teaching is carried on in each izba by turns till they come to the end of the village. Day after day, the teacher and his ink-bottle, with one or two books under his arm, passes from hut to hut followed by a crowd of white-faced, flax-haired children. He eats what they eat, i.e., black bread, potatoes, and dried mushrooms. The school-books are well taken care of,

and pass from generation to generation. The peasant who has not money enough to buy a sufficient quantity of black bread and salt to feed his family, has little money to spend on his children's school-books. His eldest son learns to write with one and the same nib for two whole winters; it then passes on to the next son, and is mended many times before being finally thrown away, quite incapable of writing any longer. The ink-store consists of a tiny bottle of ink poured into a wine-bottle, and then filled up with water. In warm, well-built izbas the scholars sit in their bright-coloured cotton shirts. In cold izbas, where the wind whistles through crannies, and where the earthen floor is damp and uneven, they sit in a variety of costumes. One has on his father's sheep-skin coat; another that of his mother, sister, or elder brother; a third is dressed in a long dark-blue cloth kaftan, and most of them are in simply indescribable rags. Long felt boots or cold baste shoes cover their stockingless feet. The hut is dark and low-ceilinged. The picture of a Russian saint hangs in the corner opposite the door. Iron nails dot the walls, with all manner of household garments hanging on them. In the centre of the room stands a cupboard or an immense wooden box, but far oftener, a cradle hanging from the roof with an eternally-crying baby. Narrow wooden benches are round the room, and a stove made of fuller's earth and sand is built in one corner. On it and on the benches the different members of the family sleep at night. Add to this the trunk of a tree hollowed out into a washing-trough, one or two wooden or earthen bowls, pails, horse-collars, reins, axes, and wooden spades, and you have the rest of the furniture. In a Russian peasant's hut there is but one room, and, lessons or no lessons, the household work must be carried on as usual. The harassed and irritable peasant-mother washes, and gets dinner, and feeds the cattle, and caresses and beats her noisy little ones in turns, in the presence of school and school-master; lambs, pigs, dogs, and fowls are also there.

The peasants prefer these Samorodney schools to the better appointed Zemstvo Free Schools: firstly, because they are close at hand, only a few doors away; and secondly, because their children can here learn to read and write (in a very sorry fashion, it is true) in the short space of six or nine months, and can then be kept at home and begin to work for ten or fifteen

kopecks a day. Winter is the only season during which they can spare their children. In spring, summer, and autumn they must supply the place of elder brothers taken for soldiers, and do men's work in the house and in the field, And yet, as may be seen, both parents and children equally prize the magic art of reading and writing! It brings the letter from the far-away soldier-son, and often does it enable the elders to avoid the double and illegal payment of taxes, passport money, and various police documents. On Sundays and Saints'-days they gather round the school-master and listen attentively to the newspaper, borrowed from land-owner, priest, or Zemstvo School teacher. It is true, this reading is not always satisfactory. The Samorodney teacher reads at the rate of a steam-engine, without paying the least attention to stops or accents. The peasants stare at him in silence, stroke their beards—and how are they to understand, since he does not understand a word of what he is reading himself? He can write—slowly, to be sure, can count up to a thousand, and knows addition and subtraction. Multiplication and division are beyond him, and did not enter into the programme of the Zemstvo School where he received his education. He receives from ten to twenty roubles a winter from the united village, lives by turn in every izba, and has but little love for his vocation. He will be taken for the army in another year or two, and in the meanwhile prefers teaching to field-work. The peasants hire him because they have no means to engage a better, and because, being a peasant himself, he is willing to put up with their food, and sleep on their stoves at night.

The retired soldier is a teacher of the worst description. He is rough and brutal; whips, beats, and pinches most unmercifully. He is drunk every Saint's-day, and for more than half the week is absent from his duty. When he does return to school, he easily re-establishes his dignity by telling the children of the grand parade when he saw "The White Czar," or of some foreign land he marched through, a land that was bright and sunny, with marble palaces, orange-groves, and glittering seas. The simple-minded children listen with bated breath, and running home under the impression of his tale, gleams of awe and wonder light up their tired blue eyes. Truly the scene around is very different to the land described by the soldier-school-master: a winding-sheet of deepest snow

on field and meadow; ice-bound rivers, ponds, and lakes; forests of beech and lime in their weird white shrouds; and the tolling of some far-away church bell alone to break the cold and solemn silence.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. HAROLD AND MAUVAIN VISIT THE HUNCHBACK.

FOR some time he remained in contemplation, mentally reviewing the events of the years which had elapsed since his return to his mother's hut in Mauvain's forest, where he had found the dead woman and the sleeping child lying side by side.

"With my mother, as I thought," mused he, "died certain evidence connected with Evangeline which would never be brought to light. But another lives to supply it, and she is in the valley, waiting. Something still remains to do—to bring to Mauvain and Harold the knowledge of each other's treachery; when that is accomplished, my labours are at an end. By their own hands, or by the hands of the judges of this isle, shall justice be dealt out to them. My work in life seems already to be over, and all that is left to me is to sit and watch the happiness of those I love, and who hold me, I believe, in something more than common regard. Evangeline and Joseph Sylvester will marry; he has a strong arm and a stout heart, and will be able to guard his treasure from evil. My tender flower! You will never know what I owe you, for none but I can realise the dark depths into which my soul was plunged when, in the presence of death, you opened your eyes and smiled upon me. That smile was like the bursting of a star within my heart, and the light it shed upon the dark and weary path I was treading shines clearly now. Yes, they will marry, and will pass their lives in the house I have built for them in the Valley of Lilies; and by-and-by, perhaps, I shall hold a child within these arms—Evangeline's child! And it will be taught to lisp my name in accents of affection. Eternal wonder of Nature! To what end are you working in the ages yet to come, through life that is ever sweet and love that is ever new! For my life and for myself I thank you, wise mother of the world. You have given me a rich reward for my early years of misery. I am grateful. Shall I repine that a child of my blood has never wound its arms

about my neck, and that my lips have never given or received a lover's kiss? No; let me rather rejoice that no being lives to bear my shape, and that my days have not been productive of evil."

At this point of his musings Ranf fancied he heard a sound without, and going to the door of his hut, he threw it open. There was no moon, and there would be none, for a couple of hours; darkness was falling upon the mountain.

"It is well," muttered Ranf, "that Margaret Sylvester has Joseph with her; they will reach the valleys in safety, and I shall know by the lighting up of my house, 'Chrysanthos,' whether all is well. That will not be till midnight."

From where he stood he faced the Valley of Lilies, but he could not distinguish his house through the gathering darkness. Mentally he followed the footsteps of Margaret and Joseph.

"They are now at the second hut," he muttered; "there is no danger on the road."

* * * *

But lower down the mountain the mists had gathered more thickly, and lingered in the middle distance. Margaret and Joseph, hand clasped in hand, slowly pursued their way; they reached the second hut in safety, and half an hour afterwards, Joseph said:

"In less than an hour we shall be home." His heart glowed with love; although his mother was by his side, it was only of Evangeline he thought. As he spoke, the form of a man ascending the mountain brushed past them. Margaret uttered an exclamation of alarm.

"Who goes there?" was asked, in a man's voice.

"Hush!" whispered Margaret; "I know that voice; do not answer it."

But again the question was asked. "Who goes there? Speak, or my sword shall compel you."

"Peaceable inhabitants of the isle," replied Joseph, "who are not to be frightened by threats. Who are you that question so insolently?"

"It is Mauvain," whispered Margaret.

The man caught the whisper. "You are right, whoever you may be," said Mauvain; "and you can go your way in peace. Come you from the hunchback's hut?"

"Yes."

"I was told no mortal but he dare ascend this cursed mount."

"It is the first time we ever set foot upon it."

"It is the same with me; and shall be

the last. He is at home, then, this crooked wonder?"

"You will find him in his hut at the top of the mountain," said Joseph.

"Joseph?" cried Margeret, in terror; "what have you done? That man is Ranf's enemy!"

"Ah, mistress, I recognise your voice," said Mauvain; "it is true I am Ranf's enemy. But if you think he is in any secret danger from me, you are mistaken. What is done between us will be done openly. The hunchback can take care of himself."

"Aye," said Joseph. "Ranf is a match for more than one. It is better to be his friend than his enemy. If your errand is not peaceable, I should advise you to retrace your steps."

"Is the road upward passably safe?"

"There is a fair track to the top, made by Ranf, the work of many years; but care is needed."

"Mistress," said Mauvain, "did Harold visit you?"

"He did."

"And you are ready to worship him as a model of excellence and virtue?"

"You are villains, both of you," replied Margaret, with indignation; "your presence in this isle is a blot upon the land."

"You wrong the man who was once my friend," said Mauvain gently; "he is worthy both of friendship and love. It has never been my fate to meet with a gentleman more deserving of trust and confidence. Good-night."

But neither Margaret nor Joseph returned the salutation, and Mauvain pursued his lonely way.

* * * *

Ranf once more fancied he heard the sound of a man's voice; it was faint and indistinct, but upon listening intently it came to his ears more clearly, and it was his own name he seemed to hear.

"Ranf! Ranf!"

He walked downwards in the direction of the sound, and cried: "Is it mortal or spirit who calls my name?"

"In honest faith," was the answer, "at this moment it is mortal; but if you are not quick, I shall lose my hold on earth, literally and spiritually."

Every foot of the mountain was familiar to the hunchback, and he knew that the voice proceeded from one of the most dangerous passes. He needed no light to guide him, and in a few moments he was on his knees by the side of a precipice over

which the body of a man was hanging in the most perilous position. The man had caught hold of the thin twisted roots of a slender tree, which by good fortune had been laid bare by the rains, but his hold was growing weaker, and his desperate grasp and endeavours to raise himself had loosened the earth about the young roots to such an extent that, if he had been left to himself, his fate would have been speedy and certain. Ranf peered into the man's face.

"Harold the sculptor!"

"Ranf the hunchback!"

Ranf spoke with a frown; Harold, in almost a blithe tone.

"Beg your life!" cried Ranf.

"I do, most humbly," said Harold, with a faint laugh.

But before Ranf made this demand, his arm was around the sinking man.

"Gently, gently," said Harold; "I am hurt. Ah! it is well. Take care; do not tear my vest; there are memorials here in the shape of flowers—flowers—from the grave— Oh, God, I thank thee!"

And being safe upon solid earth, Harold swooned away.

Ranf did not pause to decide upon his course of action. He raised the insensible body, and bore it with some tenderness to his hut, where he laid it upon his bed.

"Not dead," he muttered, as he placed his hand upon Harold's heart. "What are these? Flowers, as he said, and not quite withered. From whose grave?"

Harold opened his eyes, and for a little while the men gazed at each other in silence. Then Harold said faintly:

"If I had been told that I should ever have owed my life to you, my friend and foe, I should have laughed in the speaker's face. I hate and despise you to such a degree that the obligation you have laid me under is somewhat of a bitter joke. Give me my flowers, Ranf. A short time since I was beginning to admire you; better than that, I was beginning, as I believed, to do you justice. But I have discovered that a deformed man is not necessarily a noble and exemplary being, and where once I despised, now I hate you."

"I would not have it otherwise," said Ranf.

"To rob a man," continued Harold, "at a critical crisis in his life, of the respect and sympathy of a good woman—to do this by what must be slander—is the work of a coward—and you are one! It was to tell you this that I determined to beard

you in your den—such as you deserve no better lodgment. In the dark, missing the path, I slipped, and found myself hanging between earth and—well, that point is yet to be made clear to my comprehension. Have you any food in your hut?"

"I have."

"Give me some, and I will pay for it in my heart's blood, or yours. I am at the present moment so weak and famished that if you were to press your fingers on my throat, I should not have strength to resist an abrupt introduction into another world. I have not tasted food since yesterday morning. Without being much of an arithmetician, I should say I have a thirty-six hours' hunger upon me; and as you may guess, hunchback, I have hitherto lived upon the fat of the land, and have never known want—which makes my case worse than that of a poor wretch who is used to starvation. Then I am hurt; my left arm is terribly gashed. Nay, let it alone; it will not be improved by your nursing. Give me food, coward and slanderer!"

Ranf placed food upon the table, and two bottles of wine, and Harold rose without assistance, and pouring into a wooden measure full half of a bottle, drank it in one long, deep, satisfying draught. Setting down the measure, he partook of the food, justifying his plea of hunger by the eagerness with which he ate.

"I am strong again," he said; "I retract a word I have twice applied to you. Ranf, you are no coward—but you must have within your breast the heart of a fiend. As I was toiling up this mountain there passed by me a man and a woman. They almost discovered me, but I succeeded in keeping myself from their sight. Have they been here?"

"Yes."

"It will not interest me to learn upon what errand—but it must have been a momentous one that a woman should be impelled to undertake such a journey."

"Truly the mountain is growing in repute," said Ranf; "this is a memorable day in its history. You have promised to pay for the food you have eaten in your heart's blood, or mine. The payment will be sufficient; I shall exact it."

"Nothing will please me better. But you are unarmed; I have my sword, as you see."

Ranf produced two rapiers, and placed them on the table. "The moon is rising," he said; "it will be light soon upon the mountain, and we shall find a piece of level

ground without—an altar upon which you shall meet with justice. God has sent you here to meet it, and on this night, at this hour, of all nights and hours in our lives. I would not change shapes with you for the wealth of the stars. You are not worth even a hunchback's hate."

"It may be as you say," said Harold thoughtfully, "and that this hour may be my last. For my part, I am weary of life, and shall yield it up not unwillingly. But before we cross swords—I had no idea, Ranf, that you were skilled in fence, but you are admirable in everything it seems—I would have something made plain to me. It will be light enough outside for our purpose, but light is required here"—he touched his breast. "Yesterday it was in my power to bring relief to the heart of a suffering woman!"

"Use names," said Ranf sternly; "the time is past for subterfuge."

"Not before yesterday was I made acquainted with the true particulars of the story of Margaret and Clarice; I learnt them in an interview with Mauvain, and, renouncing his friendship—I have touched you, I perceive; you are but a clumsy wizard, after all—I went at once to Margaret Sylvester, and revealed to her all that I had learned. For my innocent share in Clarice's sad story——"

"Innocent share!" exclaimed Ranf, with deepest scorn; "you proclaim that to me, who but an hour ago gave that wronged unhappy woman's confession into the hands of her sister!"

"For my innocent share," repeated Harold, "in that sad story, I do not hold myself blameless; I am guilty, and deserve punishment and condemnation—but not at your hands, hunchback—at the hands of a higher Power. Yet have I done no wrong, and had I known what I have lately learnt I would have shed my best blood in Clarice's service. Never was man more repentant—never was man more heart-stricken than I—when, won to Margaret Sylvester's side by her almost saintly devotion and courage, I went to her house, and related to her all that I knew. Will it help you to an understanding of my feelings if I tell you that I loved Clarice with a most earnest love, and that if I had not been misled and deceived by my friend, her life might have been happy and honoured? Take it for what you deem it worth—it is the truth. Then, when Margaret Sylvester, judging me by an inward light, believing in my sympathy and my

sorrow, held out to me the hand of forgiveness—when, knowing I had no roof to cover me, no soul to speak to in all the length and breadth of this Silver Isle, she begged me to accept—Heaven bless her for it!—the hospitality of her home—you, by a slanderous message, destroy my hope, and rob me of the sweetest comfort that was ever offered to the heart of an unhappy man. What was in your message concerning me?"

"I told her that I knew she had visited Mauvain; I warned her to believe not a word she heard from your lips or from Mauvain's; I said that for your own purposes you would lie and lie—and that of the two you were the more subtle villain of the two—as I should prove to her by the written testimony of her own sister."

"I can understand now why she turned me from her house. But if you have done me a wrong and come to the knowledge of it, you would right me."

"You, or any man."

"Have you proved to Margaret Sylvester what you promised?"

"I have proved it to her this very night. She departed from this hut with the proofs of your villainy in her possession."

"Ranf, you are mad—or dreaming!" Ranf smiled scornfully. "There is here a deeper mystery than any I have encountered. It must not remain so. My honour is at stake. Deal with me fairly, as man to man. Cast aside for a little while all suspicion of me, and assist me to probe the heart of this mystery. I met Clarice first by accident, in Mauvain's company, on the night on which she and Margaret were treacherously separated. From that night I saw neither her nor Mauvain for two years, and when we met again she and Mauvain were together. I saw that Clarice was unhappy—that she had a secret grief, and at times I urged her, out of the deep respect and sympathy I had for her—out of the deep love I bore her, but of which I never insulted her by speaking—to confide in me. Honestly I desired to help her; but she kept her heart closed, saying sometimes that of all men in the world I was the man she would have chosen to confide in, had not her faith and trust in human nature been irretrievably shattered. Farther than that I never went; nor did she. To the last day I beheld her I treated her with such tenderness and respect as I would have treated an honoured sister. Now

what grounds have you for slandering me, and for bringing her name in injurious connection with mine?"

"Did Mauvain have another friend of the name of Harold?"

"None other."

"Had you a friend, bearing your name?"

"No."

"The testimony which convicts you is written by Clarice herself in a Bible given to her by her father; that Bible is now in Margaret Sylvester's hands. It is in the form of a diary, written by Clarice from day to day, in which she describes the manner in which she was wooed and betrayed. That record is one of almost incredible baseness, and the name of her lover and betrayer is freely used. The name is Harold—and you are he!"

"As there is a heaven above us, and a God around us," cried Harold, "whatever name is there written, it is not I! Do you know the truth when you hear it, or is your mind as crooked as your body? Again I repeat, I treated Clarice as an honoured sister. Except in believing what Mauvain told me of her, I never wronged the suffering girl in thought or deed!"

Ranf gazed steadily at Harold, who met his gaze unflinchingly.

"If what you say is true," said Ranf, "you have been grievously slandered—but not by me, nor by Clarice. Search your mind for a clue."

"I can find none."

"Absolutely none?"

"Absolutely none."

A singular smile crossed Ranf's lips, and he inclined his head to the door. "Do you hear nothing?"

"Nothing."

"My ears have been more keenly trained to sound than yours. There are steps upon the mountain—listen now; they are approaching, nearer—nearer." He threw open the door; the mountain was bathed in moonlight—and coming up the path was a man whose face was set towards the hut. "You should know him," said Ranf.

"It is Mauvain," said Harold, almost in a whisper.

"It is Mauvain," replied Ranf. "Can you not find a clue in your mind to this false use of your name? if it be false, as you may soon discover. Is it not possible that Clarice's lover for some time concealed his own name and wooed her in the name of an absent friend? The deception could not be kept up for ever, and when it was confessed, it neither lessened

nor added to her shame. Say that this is possible—what near friend would occur to your mind as likely to use you for his purpose?"

"Mauvain!" cried Harold.

"Aye, Mauvain," said Ranf; and at that moment Mauvain came straight through the moonlight, and stood upon the threshold of the hut.

CHAPTER XXXIX. THE CHALLENGE.

"WELCOME," said Ranf, with a bright glitter in his eyes. "Had you timed your visit with mathematical precision, it could not have been more opportune. I never hoped for the honour of receiving Mauvain beneath roof of mine; this is a night in my life not to be forgotten."

Mauvain did not immediately speak; the presence of Harold surprised him, and he looked from one to the other in irresolution and doubt. Harold said no word, but kept his eyes fixed upon Mauvain's face, with a stern and thoughtful meaning.

Ranf continued: "Have you come to bring me news from the old world? I left so many friends there, who are doubtless anxious for my welfare! It is long since we met, Mauvain; you have aged. I miss a certain brightness in you; hearing footsteps on the mount, I observed that they lacked elasticity and lightness; and indeed your whole manner is wanting in gaiety. Without doubt your journey must have fatigued you, but you have certainly aged; your time is coming! Mauvain, there is wine; I have drunk at your expense; drink now at mine. No? Well, I confess it is presumptuous in me to expect the condescension. To business, then. What brings you here?"

"I am here," said Mauvain deliberately, "to punish a knave for presumption, and to teach him that it is dangerous to use the name of his betters as freely as I have reason to suppose you have used mine."

"There are more ways than one of using names," retorted Ranf, "as you may presently learn."

"Were you what you once were," said Mauvain, "a serf and dependent of mine, I would have you whipped."

"As you have had others, standing by the while to enjoy the torture and the degradation of what was possibly a higher nature than your own. Such enjoyment cannot now be yours; we are in a free land. How, then, do you propose to punish my presumption? By physical or

moral force? In either case, Mauvain, you would find yourself at a disadvantage."

"I cannot lift you to my level; I descend to yours. You have rapiers on the table. I commence my lesson thus." He raised his jewelled cane, and was advancing towards Ranf when Harold interposed.

"This quarrel is mine, Mauvain; you must first give me satisfaction."

Mauvain recoiled, and his cane dropped to the ground.

"I thought, Harold, we had settled our affairs."

"So thought I; but within this last hour I have had cause to believe that you have fixed a deeper wrong upon me than any I have endured."

"Within this last hour! Then you have heard it from the lips of that knave!"

"It is through Ranf I have learnt it."

"And you would set his word against mine, Harold!"

"No. Am I free to speak, Ranf?"

"Entirely free. It is your honour that is at stake, not mine."

"If I find you have deceived me, your life shall answer for it."

"This is no time for threat or boast. Settle first with him. He will neither lie nor equivocate; if he does either, I have a witness in the valley below"—he looked out of the door, which was open; the mists were rolling away, and the moonlight shone over the lovely plains—"I have a witness in the valley below who will bring his shame and his guilt home to him."

"You are in league, I perceive," said Mauvain haughtily. "What deeper wrong than any you have advanced have I done you?"

"If what I suspect is true," said Harold, "you have used my name for a base and shameful purpose. Once more I recall the name of Clarice. You know in what esteem I held her. You know I loved her, and how through her, by means of your own calumnious words with respect to her, I lost my faith in woman's purity. Was it necessary that you should be guilty of a double betrayal? Was it necessary to your purpose that you should woo an innocent, trusting, helpless girl, and bring her to shame, in the name of a friend, con-

cealing your own because you were fearful of using it?"

A deadly pallor crept over Mauvain's face.

"Learn something more," said Ranf to Harold; "in that friend's name a ceremony was performed which Clarice believed was an honourable marriage. It was a trick, worthy of what had gone before."

Harold's lips quivered at this new testimony, and his face grew as white as Mauvain's.

"I await your answer," he said. "Did you thus use my name, and conceal your own? You will not speak? By Heaven you shall!"

Mauvain raised his hand gently.

"There is no need for violent words, Harold," he said, in a low, soft voice. "What I did was done with no intent to injure you."

"Jesuit!" cried Harold. "I will have an answer, straight to the point! Did you woo Clarice, and go through a false marriage with her, in my name? Answer, as you are a gentleman—yes or no!"

"Yes."

Harold covered his face with his hands, as though to shut out the consciousness of villainy so base. For a minute or two there was silence. Then Harold rose, and saying sternly, "There remains but this," took one of the rapiers from the table, and pointed outside. "Ranf, you will conduct us to your plot of level ground—your altar of justice. Come," he said to Mauvain, "there is no question of inequality between us."

But Mauvain did not stir.

"I cannot fight with you, Harold," he said tenderly.

"You must! There is no escape for you or me. It is the last night on earth for one."

Mauvain looked at him with wistful, imploring eyes.

"Harold!"

"You hesitate still! Coward!" and with his open hand, Harold struck Mauvain full in the face.

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CHAPTER VIII. "GOD WOTE THAT WORLDLY JOY IS SONE AGO."

PERFECT mistress of her boat, Daphne revelled in the lonely delight of the river. She felt no grief at the loss of Mr. Turchill's company. He had been very kind to her, he had been altogether devoted and unselfish, and the gipsy breakfasts in the old boat-house had been capital fun. But these delights would have palled in time; while the languid pleasure of drifting quietly down the stream, thinking her own thoughts, dreaming her own dreams, could never know satiety. She was so full of thoughts, sweet thoughts, vague fancies, visions of an impossible future, dreams which made up half her life. What did it matter that this airy fantastic castle she had built for herself was no earthly edifice, that she could never live in it, or be any nearer it that she was to-day? To her the thing existed, were it only in dream-land; it was a part of herself and of her life; it was of more consequence to her than the commonplace routine of daily existence—the dressing, and dining, and driving, and visiting.

Had her life been more varied, full of duty, or even diversified by the frivolous activity of pleasure, she could not have thus given herself up to dreaming. But she had few pleasures and no duties. Madoline held her absolved from every care and every trouble on the ground of her youth. She did not like parish work of any kind; she hated the idea of visiting the poor; so Madoline held her excused

from that duty, as from all others. Her mind would awaken to the serious side of life when she was older, her sister thought. She seemed now to belong to the flowers and butterflies, and the fair ephemeral things of the garden.

Thus Daphne, ignored by her father, indulged by her sister, enjoyed a freedom which is rarely enjoyed by a girl of eighteen. Her Aunt Rhoda looked on and disapproved, and hoped piously that she would come to no harm, and was surprised at Lina's weakness, and thought Daphne's bright little boat a blot upon the landscape when it came gliding down the river below the Rectory windows. The parson's rich glebe was contiguous with Sir Vernon Lawford's property, and Daphne hardly knew where her father's fields ended or where the church fields began.

Edgar Turchill, degraded from his post of instructor, still contrived to spend a considerable portion of his life at South Hill. If he was not there for lawn-tennis in the afternoon, with the rector's wife for a fourth, he was there in the evening for billiards. He fetched and carried for Madoline, rode over to Warwick to get her a new book, or to Leamington to match a skein of crewel. There was no commission too petty for him, no office too trivial or lowly, so that he might be permitted to spend his time with the sisters.

Daphne thought this devotedness a bad sign, and began to fear that the canker was at his heart, and that he would die for love of Madoline when the fortunate Gerald came home to claim her.

"You poor creature," she said to him one day, "you foolish moth, why flutter

round the flame that must destroy you? I declare you are getting worse every day."

"You are wrong," said Edgar; "I believe I am getting cured."

What did Daphne dream about in those languid summer mornings, as her boat moved slowly down the stream in the cool shadow of the willows, with only a gentle dip of the sculls now and then to keep her straight? Her thoughts were all of the past, her fancies were all of the future. Her thoughts were of the nameless stranger who went across the Jura last year—one little year ago—almost at this season. Her dreams were of meeting him again. Yet the chances against such a meeting reduced it almost to an impossibility.

"The world is so horribly large," she reflected sadly, "and I told him such atrocious stories. It will be a just punishment if I never see him any more. Yet how am I to live through my life without ever looking on his face again!"

It had gone so far as this: it seemed to her almost an absolute need of her soul that they two should meet, and know more of each other.

The ardent sensitive nature had been thus deeply impressed by the first bright and picturesque image presented to the girlish fancy. It was something more than love at first sight. It was the awakening of a fresh young mind to the passion of love. She had changed from a child to a woman, in the hour when she met the unknown in the forest.

"Who is he? what is he? where shall I find him?" she asked herself. "He is the only man I can ever love. He is the only man I will ever marry. All other men are low and commonplace beside him."

The river was the confidant and companion of all her dreams—the sweet lonely river, flowing serenely between green pasture, where the cattle stood in tranquil idleness, pastern deep in purple clover. She had no other ear in which to whisper her secret. She had tried, ever so many times, to tell Madoline, and had failed. Lina was so sensible, and would be deeply shocked at such folly. How could she tell Lina, whose wooing had been conducted in the most conventionally correct manner, with everybody's consent and approval, that she had flung her heart under the feet of a nameless stranger, of whom the only one fact she knew was that he was engaged to be married?

So she kept this one foolish secret locked in her own breast. The passion was not deep enough to make her miserable, or to spoil the unsophisticated joys of her life. Perhaps it was rather fancy than passion. It was fed and fostered by all her dreams. But her life was in no wise unhappy because this love lacked more substantial food than dreaming. God had given her that intense delight in Nature, that love of His beautiful earth, for which Faustus thanked his Creator. Field, streamlet, wood, and garden, were sources of inexhaustible pleasure. She loved animals of all kinds. The grey Jersey cows in the marshy water meadows; the house dogs, and yard dogs, and stable terriers—supposed to be tremendous at rats, yet never causing any perceptible diminution of that prolific race; the big white horses at the farm, with their coarse plebeian tails tied up into tight knots, their manes elaborately plaited, and their harness bedizened with much brazen ornamentation; Madoline's exquisite pair of dark chestnuts, thoroughbred to the tips of their delicate ears; Sir Vernon's massive roadster; Boiler and Crock, the old carriage-horses—Daphne had an affection for them all. They were living things, with soft friendly eyes, more unvaryingly kind than human eyes, and they all seemed to love her. She was more at her ease with them than in the softly-lighted, flower-scented drawing-room, where Sir Vernon always seemed to look at her as if he wished her away, and where her aunt worried her about her want of deportment.

With Lina she was always happy. Lina's love and gentleness never varied.

Daphne came home after a morning wasted on the river, to sit at her sister's feet while she worked, or to lie on the sofa while Lina read to her, glad to get in the thin edge of the educational wedge in the form of an interesting article from one of the *Quarterlies*, or a few pages of good poetry. Daphne was a fervent lover of verse, so that it came within the limits of her comprehension. Her tastes were catholic; she worshipped Shakespeare; she adored Byron and Shelley and Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, and the simpler poems of Robert Browning; and she had heard vaguely of verses written by a poet called Swinburne, but this was all she had been permitted to learn of the latest development of the lyric muse. Byron and Tennyson, it is needless to say were her especial favourites.

"One makes me feel wicked, and the other makes me feel good: but I adore them both," she said.

"I don't see what you can find in Childe Harold to make you wicked," argued Madoline, who had the old-fashioned idea, hereditary of course, that Byron was the poet of the century.

"Oh, I can hardly tell you; but there is a something, a sense of short-coming in the world generally, an idea that life is not worth living, that amidst all that is most beautiful and sacred and solemn and interesting upon earth, one might just as well be dead; one would be better off than walking about a world in which virtue was never rightly rewarded, truth and honour and courage of lofty thoughts never fairly understood—where everything is at sixes and sevens, in short. I know I express myself horribly, but the feeling is difficult to explain."

"I think what you mean is that Byron, even at his loftiest and best, wrote like a misanthrope."

"I suppose that's it. Now, Tennyson, though his poetry never lifts me to the skies, makes me feel that earth is a good place and heaven better; that high thoughts and noble deeds bear their fruit somehow, and somewhere; that it is better to suffer a good deal, and sacrifice one's dearest desires in the cause of duty and right, than to snatch some brief joys out of life, and perish like the insects that are born and die in a day."

"I am so glad you can enjoy good poetry, dear," said Madoline, delighted at any surcease of frivolity in her young sister.

"Enjoy it! I revel in it; it is my delight. Pray don't suppose that I dislike books, Lina. Only keep away from me grammars, and geographies, and biographies of learned men, and voyages to the North Pole—there is a South Pole, too, isn't there, dear? though nobody ever seems to worry about it—and you may read me as many books as you like."

"How condescending of you, little one," said Madoline, smiling at the bright young face looking up from the sofa-pillow, on which Daphne's golden head reclined in luxurious restfulness. "Well, I will read to you with pleasure. It will be a delight to me to help you carry on your education; for though girls learn an immense number of things at school they don't seem to know much when they come away. We will read together for a couple of hours a day if you like, dear."

"Till Gerald comes home," retorted Daphne; "he will not let you give me two hours of your life every day. He will want you all to himself."

"He can join our studies; he is a great reader."

"Expose my ignorance to a future brother-in-law! Not for worlds!" cried Daphne. "Let us talk about him, Lina. Aren't you delighted to think he is coming home?"

"Yes; I am very glad."

"How do papa and Gerald get on together?"

"Not too well, I am sorry to say. Papa is fonder of Edgar than of Gerald. You know how prejudiced he is about race and high birth. I don't think he has ever quite forgiven Gerald his father's trade."

"But there is Lady Geraldine to fall back upon. Surely she makes amends."

"Hardly, according to papa's ideas. You see the Earldom of Heronville is only a creation of Charles the Second's reign, and his peerages are not always respectable. I believe there were scandals about the first countess. Her portrait by Sir Peter Lely hangs in the refectory at Goring Abbey. She was a very lovely woman, and Lady Geraldine was rather proud of being thought like her."

"Although she was not respectable," said Daphne. "And was there really a likeness?"

"Yes; and a marked one. I can see it even in Gerald, who is the image of his mother—the same dreamy eyes, the same thoughtful mouth. But you will be able to judge for yourself when Gerald comes home, for I have no doubt we shall be going over to the Abbey."

"The Abbey? It is a very old place, I suppose?"

"No; it was built by Mr. Goring."

"Why Abbey? Surely that means an old place that was once inhabited by monks."

"It was Mr. Goring's fancy. He insisted upon calling his house an abbey. It was foolish, of course; but, though he was a very good man, I believe he had a slight leaven of obstinacy in his disposition, and when once he made up his mind about anything he was not to be turned from his purpose."

"Perverse old creature! And is the Abbey nice?"

"It is as grand and as beautiful a place as money could make it. There are cloisters copied from those at Muckross, and the dining-room has a Gothic roof, and

is called a refectory. The situation is positively lovely : a richly timbered valley, sheltered by green hills."

"And you are to be mistress of this magnificent place. Oh, Lina, what shall I do when you are married, and I am left alone here tête-à-tête with papa? How shall I support my life?"

"Dearest, by that time you will have learned to understand your father, and you will be quite at your ease with him."

"I think not. I am afraid he is one of those mysteries which I shall never fathom."

"My love, that is such a foolish notion. Besides, in a year or two my Daphne may have a husband and a house of her own—perhaps a more interesting one than Goring Abbey," added Lina, thinking of Hawksyard, which seemed to her Daphne's natural destination.

June ripened, and bloomed, and grew daily more beautiful. It was peerless weather, with just such blue skies and sunny noontides as there had been at Fontainebleau last year, but without the baking heat and the breathless atmosphere. Here there were cool winds to lift the rippling hair from Daphne's brow, and cool grass under her feet. She revelled in the summer beauty of the earth; she spent almost all her life out of doors, on the river, in the woods, in the garden. If she studied, it was under the spreading boughs of the low Spanish chestnut which made a tent of greenery on the lawn. Sometimes she carried her drawing-book to some point of vantage on a neighbouring hill, and sketched the outline of a wide range of landscape, and washed in a sky, and began a tree in the foreground, and left off in disgust. She never finished anything. Her portfolio was full of beginnings, not altogether devoid of talent: mouse-coloured cows, deep-red oxen, every kind of tree and rock and old English cottage, or rick-yard, or grey stone village church: but nothing finished, the stamp of an impetuous, impatient temper upon all.

There had been no definite announcement as to Gerald's return. He was in Sweden, seeing wonderful falls and grottoes, which he described in his letters to Madoline, and he was coming back soon, perhaps before the end of July. He had told the Abbey servants to be prepared for him at any time. This indefiniteness kept Madoline's mind in a somewhat perturbed state; yet she had to be outwardly calm, and full of thoughtfulness for her father,

who required constant attention. His love for his elder daughter was the one redeeming grace of a selfish nature. It was a selfish love, for he would have willingly let her waste her life in maiden solitude for the sake of keeping her by his side: but it was love, and this was something in a man of so stern and unyielding a temper.

He liked her to be always near him, always within call, his companion abroad, his counsellor at home. He consulted her about all the details of his estate and her own, rarely wrote a business letter without reading it to her. She was wanted in his study continually. When he was tired after a morning's business, she read the newspapers to him, or a heavy political paper in Blackwood or one of the Quarterlies were he inclined to hear it. She never shirked a duty, or considered her own pleasure. She had educated herself to be her father's companion, and counted it a privilege to minister to him.

"Faultless daughter, perfect wife," said Sir Vernon, clasping her hand as she sat beside his sofa; "Goring is a lucky fellow to get such a prize."

"Why should he not have a good wife, papa? He is good himself. Remember what a good son he was."

"To his mother, admirable. I doubt if he and old Goring hit it quite so well. I wish he came of a better stock."

"That is a prejudice of yours, dear father."

"It is a prejudice that I have rarely seen belied by experience. I wish you had chosen Edgar. There is a fine fellow for you, a lineal descendant of that Turchill who was sheriff of Warwickshire in the reign of the Confessor. Shakespeare's mother could trace her descent from the same stock. So you see that Edgar can claim alliance with the greatest poet of all time."

"I should never have thought it," said Madoline laughingly; "his lineage doesn't show itself in his conversation. I like him very much, you know, papa; indeed, I may say I love him, but it is in a thoroughly sisterly fashion. By-the-bye, papa, don't you think he might make an excellent husband for Daphne?" she faltered with downcast eyes, as she went on with her crewel-work.

"She would be an uncommonly fortunate girl if she got him," retorted Sir Vernon, with a clouding countenance; "he is too good for her."

"Oh, father! can you speak like that

of your own daughter?" remonstrated Lina.

"Is a man to shut his eyes to a girl's character because she happens to bear his name?" asked Sir Vernon impatiently. "Daphne is a lump of self-indulgent frivolity."

"Indeed you are mistaken," cried Lina; "she is very sweet tempered and loving."

"Sweet tempered! Yes; I know the kind of thing: winning words, pretty looks, trivial fascinations—a creature whose movements you watch, fascinated by her variety, as you watch a bird in a cage—graceful, beautiful, false, worthless. I have some experience of the type."

"Father, this is the most cruel prejudice. What can Daphne have ever done to offend you?"

"Done! Is she not her mother's daughter? Don't argue with me about her, Lina. She is here beside my hearth, and I must make the best of her. God grant she may come to no harm: but I am full of fear when I think of her future."

"Then you would be glad if Edgar were to propose for her, and she were to accept him?"

"Certainly. It would be the very best thing that could happen to her; I should only feel sorry for him. But I don't think a man who once loved you would ever content himself with Daphne."

"He is very attentive to her,"

"Che sara sara!" murmured Sir Vernon languidly.

It was Midsummer Day, the hottest, brightest day there had been yet, and Daphne had given herself up to unmixed enjoyment of the warmth and light and cloudless blue sky. Sir Vernon and Madoline had a luncheon engagement at a house beyond Stoneleigh, a drive of eleven miles each way, so dinner had been postponed from eight to half-past, and Daphne had the livelong day to herself, free to follow her own devices; free even from the company of her devoted slave Edgar, who would have hung upon her like a burr had he been at home, but who was spending a few days in London with his mother, escorting that somewhat homely matron to picture-galleries, garden-parties, and theatres, and trying to rub off the rural rust of a twelve-month by a week's metropolitan friction.

Edgar was away; the light park-phaeton with the chestnuts had driven off at half-past eleven, Madoline looking lovely in a Madras muslin gown and a bonnet made

of roses, her father content to loll in the low seat by her side while she managed the somewhat vivacious cobs. Daphne watched the carriage till it vanished at a curve of the narrow wooded drive, and then ran back to the house to plan her own campaign.

"I will have a picnic," she said to herself, "a solitary, selfish, Robinson Crusoe-like picnic. I will have nobody but Tennyson and Lina's collie to keep me company; Goldie and I will go trespassing, and find a sly secret corner in Charle-cote Park where we can eat our luncheon. I believe it is against the law to stray from the miserable footpath: but who cares for law on Midsummer Day? I shall feel myself almost as brave as Shakespeare when he went poaching, and, thank goodness! there is no Justice Shallow to call me to order."

She ran to her own room for a basket, a picturesque bee-hive basket, the very one she had carried, and he had carried, at Fontainebleau. What a foolish impulse it must have been which made her touch the senseless straw with her lips, remembering whose hand had held it! Then to the housekeeper's room to forage for provisions. The wing of a chicken; a thick wedge of pound-cake; a punnet of strawberries; a bottle of lemonade; a couple of milk rolls. Mrs. Spicer would have packed these things neatly in white paper, but Daphne bundled them into the basket anyhow.

"Don't trouble, you dear good soul; they are only for Goldie and me," she said.

"You may just as well have things nice, miss. Theer, you'd have forgot the salt if I wasn't here. And if you're going to take that there collie you'll want something more substantial."

"Give me a slice of beef for him then, and a couple more of your delicious rolls," asked Daphne coaxingly. "My Goldie mustn't be starved. And be quick, like a love, for I'm in an awful hurry."

"Lor, miss, when you've got all the day before you! You'll be fearful lonesome."

"What, with Goldie, and the Idylls of the King!" exclaimed Daphne, glancing downwards at her little green cloth volume.

"Ah, well, I know when young ladies have got a nice novel to read they never feel lonesome," said Mrs. Spicer, filling every available corner of the basket, with which Daphne stepped off gaily to summon Goldie.

Goldie was a bright yellow collie, intensely vivacious, sharp-nosed, brown-eyed;

a dog that knew not what it was to be quiet, a dog you might lose at the other end of the county, confident that he would scamper home across wood and hill and valley as straight as the crow's flight. He spent half his life tied up in the stable-yard, and the other half rushing about the country with Daphne. He travelled an incalculable number of miles in the course of an ordinary walk, and was given to racing cattle. He worshipped Daphne, and held her in some awe on this cattle question, would leap into the air with mad delight when she was kind to him, or grovel at her feet when she was angry.

"Now, Goldie dear, if you and I are to lunch in Charlecote Park I must take a strap for you," said Daphne, as they started from the stable-yard, Goldie proclaiming his rapture by clamorous barking. "It will never do for you to go racing the Lucy dear, or even the Lucy oxen. We should get into worse trouble than Shakespeare did, for Shakespeare had not such a frigid father as mine. I daresay old John, the glover, was an easy-going indulgent soul whom his son could treat anyhow."

It was only a walk of two miles across the fields to Charlecote; two miles by meadows that are as lovely and as richly timbered as they could have been in Shakespeare's time. High farming is not yet the rule in Warwickshire. Hedges grow high and wild; broad oaks spread their kingly branches above the rich rank grass; dock and mallow, fox-glove, fern, and dog-rose thrive and bloom beside every ditch; and many a fair stretch of grass by the roadside—a no man's land of pleasant pasture—offers space for the hawker's van, or the children's noonday sports, or the repose of the tired tramp, lying face downwards in a rapture of rest, while the skylark thrills in the distant blue above him, and the rustle of summer leaves soothes his slumber.

It is a lovely country, lovely in its simple, pastoral, English beauty, calm and fitting cradle for a great mind.

After the fields came a lane, a green arcade with a leafy roof, through which the sun rays crept in quivering lines of light, and then the gate that opened on the footpath across Charlecote Park. Yonder showed the grey walls of the house, venerable on one side, modern on the other, and the stone single-arched bridge, and the lake, narrowing to a dull sluggish-looking stream that seemed to flow nowhere in

particular. The tallest and stoutest of the elms looked too young for Shakespeare's time. Here and there appeared the ruin of a tree, hollow of trunk, gaunt of limb, whose green branches may once have sheltered the deer he stole.

The place was very lonely. There was nobody to interfere with Daphne's pleasure, or even to object to the collie, who crept meekly by her side, held by a strap, and casting longing looks at the distant oxen. She wandered about in the loneliest bits of the park, supremely indifferent to rules and regulations as to where she might go and where she might not, till she finally deposited her basket and sunshade under a stalwart oak, and sat down at the foot thereof, with Goldie still strapped and constrained to virtue. She fastened one end of the strap to the lowest branch of the tree, Goldie standing on end licking her hands all the time.

"Now, dear, you are as comfortable as in your own stable-yard. You can admire the cows and sheep in the distance, standing about so peacefully in the sunshine as if they had never heard of sunstroke, but you can't hunt them. And now you shall have your dinner."

It was a very quiet picnic, perhaps even a trifle dull: though, at the worst, it might be better to picnic alone among the four-footed beasts in Charlecote Park, than to assume a forced gaiety in a party of stupid people, at the conventional banquet of doubtful lobster and tepid champagne, in one of the time-honoured haunts of the cockney picnicker. Daphne thought of Midsummer Day in the year that was gone, as she sat eating her chicken and sipping her lemonade, half of which had been lost in the process of uncorking. How gay she had been, how foolishly, unreasonably glad! And now a great deal of the flavour had gone out of life since her seventeenth birthday.

"How happy Lina looks now that the time for her lover's return draws near," she thought. "She has something to look forward to, some reason for counting the days: while to me time is all alike, one week just the same as another. I am a horribly selfish creature. I ought to feel glad of her gladness; I ought to rejoice in her joy. But Nature made me out of poor stuff, didn't she, Goldie dear?"

She laid her bright head on the collie's tawny coat. The pale gold of her soft flowing hair contrasted, and yet harmonised, with the ruddy hue of the dog, and made

a picture fair to look upon. But there was no one wandering in Charlecote Park to paint Daphne's portrait. She was very lucky in not being discovered by a party of eager Americans, spectacled, waterproofed, hyper-intelligent, and knowing a great deal more about Shakespeare's biography than the duller remnant of the Anglo-Saxon race still extant on this side the Atlantic.

She eat her strawberries in dreamy thoughtfulness, and fed Goldie to repletion, till he stretched himself luxuriously upon her gown, and dreamed of a chase he was too lazy to follow had he been ever so free. Then she shut the empty basket, propped herself up against the rugged old trunk, and opened the *Idylla*. It is a book to be read over again, for ever and ever, just one of those rare books of which the soul knows no weariness—like Shakespeare, or Goethe's *Faust*, or Childe Harold—a book to be opened, haphazard, anywhere.

But Daphne did not so open the volume. Elaine was her poem of poems, and it was Elaine she read to-day in that placid shade amidst green pastures and venerable trees, under a cloudless sky. Launcelot was her ideal man—faulty, but more loveable in his faultiness than even the perfect Arthur. Yet what woman would not wish—aye, even the guilty one grovelling at his feet—to be Arthur's wife?

She read slowly, pondering every word, for that fair young Saxon was to her a very real personage—a being whose sorrows gave her absolute pain as she read. Time had been when she could not read Elaine's story without tears, but to-day her eyes were dry, even to the last, when her fancy saw the barge gliding silently down the stream, with the fair dead face looking up to the sky, and the waxen hands meekly folded above the heart that had broken for love of Launcelot.

"I wonder how long his sorrow lasted," she thought, as she closed the book; and then she clasped her hands above the fair head resting against the rugged bark of the oak, and gave herself up to day-dreams, and let the afternoon wear on as it might, in placid enjoyment of the atmosphere and the landscape.

Charlecote church clock had struck five when she plucked herself out of dreamland with an effort, unstrapped her dog from the tree, took up her empty basket, and started on the journey home. She had ample leisure for her walk. Dinner was not to be until half-past eight, and Sir

Vernon and his daughter were hardly likely to be back till dinner-time.

It was a stately feast to which they had been bidden—a feast in honour of somebody's coming of age: a champagne breakfast for the quality, roasted oxen and strong ale for the commonality, speechifying, military bands—an altogether ponderous entertainment. Sir Vernon had groaned over the inevitable weariness of the affair in advance, and had talked of himself as a martyr to neighbourly feeling.

The homeward walk in the quiet afternoon light was delicious. Goldie, released from his strap directly they left Charlecote, ran and leapt like a creature possessed. Oh, how he enjoyed himself with the first herd they came to, scampering after innocent milch-cows and endangering his life by flying at the foreheads of horned oxen. Daphne let him do as he liked. She wandered out of her way a little to follow the windings of her beloved river. It was between seven and eight when she despatched Goldie to his stable-yard, and went into the cool shady hall, where two old orange-trees in great green crockery tubs scented the air.

The butler met her on her way to the morning-room.

"Oh, if you please, Miss Daphne, Mr. Goring has arrived, and would like to see you before you dress for dinner. He was so disappointed at finding Miss Lawford away from home, and he would like to have a talk with you."

Daphne looked at the tumbled white gown—it was the same she had worn last year at Fontainebleau—and thought of her towzled hair. "I am so shamefully untidy," she said; "I think I had better dress first, Brooks."

"Oh, don't, Miss Daphne. You look nice enough, I'm sure. And I daresay Mr. Goring is impatient to hear all about Miss Lawford, or he wouldn't have asked so particular to see you."

"Of course not. No; perhaps he won't notice my untidiness. I'll risk it. Yet first impressions—I don't want him to think me an underbred school-girl," muttered Daphne as she opened the drawing-room door.

The room was large, and full of flowers and objects that broke the view, and all the glow and glory of a summer sunset was shining in at the wide west window.

For a moment or so Daphne could see no one; the room seemed empty of humanity. There was the American squirrel revolving

in his big airy cage; there lay Fluff, the Maltese terrier, curled into a silky ball on the sofa; and that seemed all. But as Daphne went timidly towards the window, a figure rose from a low chair, a face turned to meet her.

She lifted her clasped hands to her breast with a startled cry.

"Nero!"

"Poppæa!"

LORD STEYNE AND HIS FAMILY.

A FAMILY that could include in its ranks and connections the Jane Seymour who married Henry the Eighth; the Lord Protector, a man celebrated as a soldier and a politician; Marshal Conway; the lady who ruled the Regent for many years, and directed such politics, or rather prejudices, as he had; the Lord Henry Seymour who was the father of the French turf; the Seymours who behaved like Paladins at Waterloo; the "Queen of Beauty" who was so conspicuous at the Eglinton Tournament; the well-known Marquis of Hertford, whose portrait as the Marquis of Steyne is familiar to all readers of Thackeray—a family that included those personages was surely a remarkable one. A history of the Seymours would be a singular and interesting record; but passing by the more remote members of the race we may come at once to the more recent generation, whose names are familiar both in this country and on the Continent.

The Lord Yarmouth who married the young heiress was born in 1777, and lived to be seventy-eight years old. His was a strange career. He could have recalled the beginning of the French Revolution, for he was precocious enough; the early debates of the regency; the wild excesses of the prince, whose companion and friend he was soon to become. He was a *détenu* at Verdun for many years, where he no doubt contributed to the amusements of that curious settlement. In his later years he forswore his native country, and disposed of much of his enormous fortune in making those heterogeneous collections of old furniture, china, and masterpieces of art which have made the Hertford Collection so remarkable. His mother was the well-known Lady Hertford who exercised such an influence over the Prince of Wales, and shook the supremacy of Mrs. Fitzherbert. The great house

in Manchester Square, so lately enlarged, beautified, or disfigured, according as tastes shall decree, was the scene of many a council at which she presided; and there was one period, during which not a day passed without the royal equipage—without royal arms, however—being seen to enter the gates. This devotion, it is now admitted, was of a platonic sort, and, indeed, the lady was at the time a grandmother. That she should have retained this influence so many years shows that she was not an unworthy member of this remarkable family.

Lord Yarmouth married Miss Fagniani, the heiress of Selwyn, who in her childhood was a sort of little heroine, disturbing for many years the domestic peace, such as it was, of that eminent wit. This is such a curious episode that we may turn aside for a few moments to consider it before coming to her husband's adventures.

About the year 1770 an Italian lady named Fagniani came to London with good introduction, and was received in the first society. She was greatly admired by the wits and men of fashion, and after a time went back to her own country. In due course of time she paid other visits, but by-and-by it became subject of remark that her little girl, who bore the pet name of "Mie-mie," and not her mamma, was the object of the devotion of those two men about town, the Duke of Queensberry, "Old Q," and Mr. George Selwyn. The proceedings of the latter became, in course of time, so extravagant, and even ridiculous, as to excite the concern of his rational friends. He adored this little creature; he wished to adopt, to buy her, at a great price; he was wretched, almost to the verge of melancholy madness, in her absence, making his vain appeals and taking every one into his confidence. All affected to sympathise and—laughed at him. He was, however, fortunate enough to secure, as his agent, one of the liveliest, wittiest, and, perhaps, most disreputable of the free clergymen who then "hung loose upon society"—Parson Warner, a rollicking, boisterous person, at the service of any gentleman of condition. This worthy agent was despatched to Paris, to try and arrange matters, and, no doubt, to tempt the Fagnianis with more handsome offers. They began to waver, to coquet a little. Mdma. Fagniani had now another child, which made the affair easier.

The delighted Selwyn could not restrain himself any longer, and rushed over to

Paris, really hoping to conclude matters. But after tantalising hopes and delays, the hapless wit found that he was as far off as ever from the accomplishment of his hopes. The parents would not consent. Mr. Selwin remained lingering in Paris; his woes and his mournful face attracting the attention of even the French. His English friends, kept informed of all the stages of the affair, affected to be indignant.

The miserable man was wasting away—had lost his appetite; and the well-known English physician at Paris, Dr. Genu, assured him that, if he gave way any further to this infatuation, his reason would go. The family, dreading some outrageous step, at last thought it better to come to terms. Within a few days, strange to relate, all was happily settled, and in a fortnight this wonderful child was carried off in triumph to Matson, her doating admirer's place in England. There she was installed as queen of the place, under care of Miss Selwyn. Every whim of hers was gratified. She was taken to Tunbridge, where she was exhibited in a coquettish Spanish hat and lace. The rollicking Warner was often bidden there, and delighted his patron by his devotion to the little thing. In every letter was a postscript addressed to his "little queen," and signed "your Snail." There she remained until gout and dropsy and old age began to overtake Mr. Selwyn, who died in the year 1791. Mie-mie inherited thirty-three thousand pounds.

Mr. Selwyn's fortune, however, was but a modest inheritance, compared with that of the Duke of Queensberry, "Old Q," which enormous heritage, on the death of that eminent reprobate, fell to the lucky Yarmouths. This was secured to them not without some litigation. There was besides a great estate in the North of Ireland, near Lisburn; which has since, owing to the spread of the flax industry, increased in value enormously. Mie-mie lived till so lately as 1856. Her husband and his red whiskers, after his royal master's death, were transferred to Paris, where he purchased that curious little bijou residence, "Bagatelle," and began that extraordinary heterogeneous collection of cabinets, furniture, and works of art, portions of which were exhibited at Bethnal Green not many years ago. During the later years of his life, the English public had glimpses of "the Marquis of Hertford," through a strange Monte Christo atmosphere, when-

ever a costly and unique picture was set up at the Hotel Druot, and secured, at "any price," by a mysterious purchaser, who proved to be the millionaire marquis. About the year 1830 he purchased the clock, figures, and bells of the old St. Dunstan's Church, and set them up at his own gate in the Regent's Park. This freak was owing to a whim he had conceived when a child, and which he recollected.

Another of the family, Lord Hugh Seymour, who was in the navy, left his little girl to the care of Mrs. Fitzherbert; who was a most affectionate guardian. But the religious prejudices of the family were aroused, and a successful attempt was made to remove the child from her care. The Prince of Wales was at that time devoted to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and he resorted to a strange system of canvassing the peers to get the decision reversed. He prevailed to a certain extent, as the child was consigned to the charge of Lord and Lady Hertford, who were on Mrs. Fitzherbert's side. This, however, brought about a new attachment of the prince, and for years he was under the influence of this mature matron; who, as we have said, was a lady of most respectable character. When he died, his treasures, as is well known, descended to the excellent Sir Richard Wallace. This disposition, however, was contested, as regards his Irish estates, by the Hertford family, and after some litigation a compromise was arranged.

There was also a Lord William Seymour who died in 1837, nearly eighty years old, and who was known for his odd tastes; wandering about the country dressed as a common sailor, stopping at wretched inns, where he slept, with a number of candles lighted up all night long.

But more singular still was the career of Lord Henry Seymour, also a Parisian, and whose good sense in the matter of horses and all that concerned horseflesh condoned an amount of eccentricity to which the French soon grew accustomed. He was a man of great strength and stature, and with tastes like those of the late Marquis of Waterford. Somewhat of a freak of his was always amusing and confounding Paris. These would not have been tolerated in one of lower rank and less wealth; but it was known that he was always ready to pay for his peculiar pleasures, and make lavish indemnities to all sufferers by his humour. The late M. de Villemessant, the agreeable but sensational proprietor of the *Figaro*, was his contemporary, and gathered from the

viveurs and clubmen who associated with the English lord some strange stories of his life. The French owe to Lord Henry the successful introduction of racing into their country. On his horses he spared nothing, and the outlay of so wealthy an amateur came opportunely to give this now popular sport a favourable start. He kept a large stud, and was successful in many races. He was himself a good judge of a horse; built complete and magnificent stables, training-ground, &c., in the country. He helped to found the now flourishing Jockey Club in 1835, and took a distinguished share in racing matters, until, disgusted by a decision in a race given against him, he abruptly sold off his horses and retired from the turf. This taste was indeed but one shape of arrogance, as he was glad to show that there were other things besides rank and money in which he could excel; and when neither his judgment, his rank, or his money together could ensure him success, he grew pettish. Thus he piqued himself on driving faster horses than any one in the Bois, and it was one of the traditional but probably exaggerated legends of the boulevards, that he had expended vast sums in securing horses with a view to out-trot some mysterious stranger who contrived to keep in advance of him. On one occasion he was bold enough to "cut in" in front of the king's carriage, which brought down an order from the Court to quit France at once. This, however, he contrived to have revoked.

These acts furnished wonder and amusement to Paris for many years. It must be allowed that the odd estimate of English character which prevailed so long in Paris was pardonable enough, considering the specimens that were thus presented to a society too mercurial or indifferent to take the trouble of making fine distinctions. And, from this point of view, the Lord Allcash of Scribe, with other stage milords, could not be considered a very gross exaggeration. Even the persistent renunciation of his country—it was said that he had never set foot in London—by a man of rank and enormous wealth, seemed in itself a singular eccentricity; and it could not be readily accounted for, save on the theory of its being national.

Lord Henry had a splendid hotel on the boulevard, at the corner of the Rue Taitbout, one floor of which he had fitted up as a gymnasium, devoted to fencing, boxing, and other athletic pastimes. Here the leading professors and amateurs met three

times a week to practice and exhibit their skill, and were treated hospitably by the noble host. Here, too, were found a whole tribe of sporting hangers-on, horse-dealers, English grooms, farceurs, and toadies. It was evident that it was the cue that his lordship should be amused or excited, and that he was secure of favour who was successful in lighting on some novelty. Those, however, who enjoyed the privilege of his intimacy were often the objects of a sort of buffoonery, pushed to an extent that no man of spirit would have endured. He delighted when he had discovered some weakness or prejudice in these companions. This gave him an opportunity for gratifying his humour. Thus he invited down, to shoot, a certain count, who had a sort of morbid antipathy to cats. This noble returning late, fatigued with his sport, was just getting into bed when he was thrown into an agony by finding an enormous dead cat between the sheets. When, with much repulsion, he had brought himself to seize it and fling it out of the window, and, overcome with sleep, was about to lie down, some concealed jets of water began to play on his bed, drenching him. When he flew to the door in a rage he found it fastened, and a roar of laughter let him know that his tormentors were enjoying his sufferings. The next day he was informed that his host was gone, but had left his compliments, with a wish that he would make himself quite at home and stay as long as it suited him. The Frenchman, beside himself with rage, came up to Paris, but could not contrive to meet his host. He sent his seconds with a challenge, but his lordship was not to be seen. This was part of the rich lord's system—a contemptuous determination not to be provoked or take offence, or allow that he was accountable for such jests as he condescended to. Strange to say, he succeeded in establishing a privilege for himself. Once, put out by the affected dandyism of one of his friends, he contrived to have some grains of gunpowder introduced into some of the choice cigars for which his house was famous. The dandy's face was much scorched by the explosion. His host roared. The victim retorted roughly, it would seem, with a blow, but the noble jester was not to be provoked into hostile measures. Useful friends and toadies were always at hand to interpose and deprecate extreme measures, while their patron kept himself reserved until the matter "blew over."

One of his dependents, a man of small means, and who was fond of horses, though an indifferent rider, he insisted should ride out with him. But it was noticed that his lordship's friend was invariably mounted on some vicious animal; any horse in the stable noted for temper being allotted to the unlucky equestrian. He was so often put in peril of his life that he was at last obliged to forego the honour of riding with his noble friend.

But even more disagreeable were his tricks at the expense of those who were in a lower class, and whom the sense of his own dignity ought to have taught him to spare. When the fencing-master had exchanged his clothes for the professional dress, he would secretly cover them with a peculiar powder, known as "*poudre à gratter*"—scratching powder—and enjoy the tortures of the victim. Another trick, which he repeated often under various forms, was that of putting jalap into chocolate or coffee.

A young protégé, who was at one of the French Lyceums, came to wish him "A happy new year," and the usual disinterestedness of the schoolboy's compliments no doubt roused his cynicism. "At your age," he said, "boys are fond of sweets. Come here to-morrow, and you shall have enough to feast the whole college. Be sure you bring a cab." The school-boy was on the following day loaded with dainties—boxes of bon-bons, which he gave away to all his companions, some two hundred in number, and even to the professors. In a few hours the whole college was taken ill, and it was found that the "goodies" had been saturated with medicine. The matter was taken up seriously, but, as usual, the English lord was prodigal of his money, and ready to make amends in any pecuniary way.

These stories are reported by M. de Villemessant, who, like other Frenchmen acquainted with the English lord, speak with a sort of horror of his sardonic and cynical tastes. Allowance must be made for professional exaggeration, especially in the case of the editor of such a paper as the *Figaro*. One cannot, therefore, guarantee their truth. But there is a coherence in these specimens of character. "You my friends?" he would say sneeringly to those who so styled themselves; "get along. You come here because it amuses you and it suits you." The same thought occurred to him in reference to his servants. There were two or three who had grown grey in his service—a favourite body-servant; a trusty English groom, named

Briggs; and, above all, a poor broken-down gentleman of good blood, actually an Italian marquis, who for years had occupied a position of genteel dependence about him, looking after his guns and other arms, serving out the precious cigars, and making some "particular" eau-de-cologne, for which he had a receipt. His "master" affected to treat him with great favour, though he was never weary of rallying him on his titles and good blood. But in his case, as in that of the old servants, the idea no doubt occurred to him: "These fellows think themselves quite secure—count on large legacies as their right. This is the secret of their long stay in my service. They begin to look on it as their right." Then came the notion of punishing them for this assumed offence. And accordingly, in the disposal of his vast fortune, not a halfpenny was left to the broken-down marquis or to any of the old servants. His heirs, however, generously allotted them a pension of sixty pounds a year each. So with his charities, as he would have called them, which were often splendid, but which he carried off as caprices or bits of sensation. He was once at a fair seen to give a remarkably handsome but wicked-looking bandit or gipsy of sixteen twenty pounds, and when asked if that was not a piece of cruel kindness to the boy, replied coolly "that it would give him a taste for money; and that when it was spent he would probably go and murder someone to get more." Indeed, this was a favourite pleasure of his, this picking out some miserable wretch and making him rich for a few days. He often was heard to say deliberately as he thus gave away his money: "There, now, is a bad seed which is sure to strike root." It may again be doubted if this be true, and it is but fair to say that his more thoughtful friends looked upon such speeches as mere pieces of pleasantry with which he tried to get rid of the artificial character of the benevolent and charitable, which he felt to be irksome and unsuited to him. At Boulogne he was made the hero of a somewhat sensational scene, which rather belongs to the Chatelet or Porte St. Martin Theatre. In a great storm some sailors were seen clinging to the shrouds of their shipwrecked vessel, and through the tempest his voice was heard offering, now ten thousand francs to save each life, now twenty-five thousand, and finally, when the number was reduced to two, one hundred thousand. It is certain, however, that he presented the town

with a lifeboat and house all complete. Yet it is not surprising to learn that he was, for a man of such a fortune, stingy. At play he would only risk a few twenty-franc pieces; and once when he had gone beyond his usual amount and lost a few thousand francs, he was so piqued that he declared he had been cheated. This compliment he paid to his own club. Neither do his hospitalities appear to have been of a large or substantial kind. There was a particular emphasis laid on his cigars, of which he was an admirable judge, and of which stores of the choicest brands were sent to him. With these he took as much pains as other men would with their wine. He treated them scientifically. He had vast oaken cases, laid out in thousands of leaden cells, one for each cigar. Before its admission into the collection he himself personally examined every cigar, rejecting such as seemed to be at all inferior. After lying by for some months a fresh examination and final selection was made; the rejected ones, still of the choicest kind, were disposed of to friends, or to some favoured tobacconist. His life was that of a sybarite—the day being laid out with a view to elegant pleasure. Yet this rich and haughty seigneur was solitary: as was said of Garrick, "He had friends, but no friend." It is stated that his chief enjoyment was looking down from his windows at the crowd turning into the Café de Paris underneath.

It was noted that exceeding caution and care for his person were displayed in every one of his proceedings. Fond as he was of boxing, he would not box unless in the padded armour of the school, requiring that his adversary should wear the gloves, though he himself did not. When he was almost a boy, his favourite sport was to give a hackney-coachman a couple of louis, seize the reins, and drive in the most disorderly manner down some narrow street, upsetting barrows, and all but running over some one; and then, when a hue and cry had been raised and pursuit was growing warm, he would slip down and escape, leaving the driver to bear the consequences.

It is surprising that he should have been endured so long, and it is unfavourable to the character of the French noblemen and gentlemen with whom he associated that they should have put up with such a patron, whose patronage was, besides, unprofitable. Gradually, however, his behaviour, which had long tried their

patience, became at last too outrageous to be endured. An incident, which he treated as a matter of course, furnished a good excuse for exhibiting an indignation that had long been felt, and he was gradually "dropped" by his "friends."

The "little circle" held its meetings at the Café de Paris, which was in fact the lower storey of his hotel. It was a pleasant club, including about a hundred members, most of whose names were well known. Among them were those of Roger de Beauvoir, Ball Hughes, Prince Belgioso, Lord Bury, Major Frazer, Captain Gronow, Alfred de Musset, St. Cyran, Count Horace de Viel Castel, and Lord Henry Seymour. A severe system of black-balling was established, one in six excluding. Alexandre, the proprietor of the café, was the caterer. Whist was played for pretty high points.

It was here that Lord Henry Seymour presented himself one morning after the scandal just alluded to and found a chilling welcome. He rested his hand on the billiard cushion, when one of the players, we are told, deliberately aimed the ball at his fingers. When the English lord angrily declared that he was awkward, the other answered that he had done it on purpose. On which Lord Henry Seymour quitted the room without saying a word. This is told by M. de Villemessant, as though it were an heroic, instead of being a childish and boyish action. Certainly no English gentleman, wishing to reprobate the conduct of a person whom he had known, would take such an absurd mode of showing his resentment. M. de Villemessant does not see that such an exhibition of womanish spite quite justified Lord Henry Seymour in withdrawing from the club. But he determined to punish the members still more, by destroying their club. He sent word to the proprietor of the café that he must give his fashionable patrons notice to quit, unless he wished to receive notice to quit himself. Furious at having thus to sacrifice his best customers, the owner of the café complained loudly of the harsh dilemma in which he was placed. And the members, at once taking a hostile tone, sent the noble landlord word that if he persisted, he would have to reckon with them. It is stated that on this threat he gave way. Such a depth of meanness seems improbable, especially as we find him later carrying out his ejectment, and driving the club to the corner of the Boulevard de la Chaussée d'Antin. Having lost its locale, the club soon languished, and before long died out.

One of the "legends" of this strange being ran, that when he was waited on by a petitioner he used to retire into his study, and draw the curtain from before a certain picture. This was a portrait of himself as St. Sebastian, pierced by innumerable arrows, while round it were the likenesses of those who were, or who had been, his friends. It was intended as a summary of the deceptions he had been subject to—a collection of those who had "taken him in." After a few moments' study of this piece he was supposed to return to the postulant, quite hardened. This ridiculous story was gravely circulated. It was stated, too, that as he opened his pile of morning despatches, his trained intelligence soon construed the first delicate approach to an application for aid, and he would at once throw the letter into the fire without reading further. He used to give out that he had been so systematically and almost invariably deceived, that he had determined to indemnify himself by declining to give charity at all. It must be said that his acquaintances credited him with too much logic to accept this excuse, and set his lack of charity down to a less reputable and more selfish cause.

The reader will ere now have been struck by a curious resemblance to Lord Byron. It will be recollected that there was the same disagreeable feature in the latter's character.

Lord Henry died in the year 1859.

THE RELIC ON THE ROCKS.

THE lustrous moon through the wintery night
Glides with the stateliest pomp of a queen,
Over filmy cloudlets of pearly white,

And a cold calm sea of transcendent sheen :
The gleam of her robe is reflected there,
And lights up her path like a mermaid's hair ;

Sheds over the tremulous sleeping sea,
A vision of beauty and pure delight,
And softens with fingers of fantasie

The grim grey cliffs' inaccessible height,
Till the soul is lost in a dreamy mist,
And all seemeth lovely the moon hath kissed.

But something hides in a rift of the rock,
Near a yawning cavern's ominous gloom,
Which the shimmering moonbeams dare not mock
With their lightsome touch, for it tells of doom ;
In its silence filling the air with sound,
And the swirl of a tempest all around.

A something with ribs, and a broken back,
Skeleton ribs that are gaunt and grim,
Lying alone in the shadow so black,

A wreck, nevermore to be taut and trim ;
Nevermore answer to breeze or to blast,
With a floating pennon, or straining mast.

Lying there, rotting, by night and by day,
Under that cruel and pitiless crag ;
Only the curlew to watch its decay,

Only the seaweed for pennon and flag : —
Nothing but timber and cordage, 'tis true ;
Only a boat—but the boat had a crew !

MY LITTLE TOUR IN WALES.

PART V.

ON the whole it is perhaps as well, unless it be thought advisable for my little tour to have a sensational termination, that some of our party know how to swim. When there is a strong south-west wind, as I have already learned from my local monitor, "the waves are dashed with immense force against the walls which keep it"—the lake I suppose understood, not the force or the wind—"within bounds, and the spray sweeps grandly over the road leading from the station." If my old Isle of Wight friends, the mares' tails, be equally true prophets in this outlandish part of the world, I have a pleasant prospect a couple of hours or so hence of accompanying them, provided always that I am not previously furnished with a free ticket to the ancient town of Bala, which, as tradition hath it, lies among the "small shells and aquatic plants" at the bottom of the lake. There is a certain excitement therefore in the chase when, after a splashy minute or so spent in retrieving Miss Tattenham's adorer, who with a chivalrous trust in the shallowness of the water, steps gallantly into a six-foot deep hole, which forthwith swallows him up amid the shrieks of his betrothed and the oburgations of her papa, our never failing friend in the flannels kicks off his shoes, whips off his coat, and with a shout to me to heave him a rope, strikes out for my derelict craft like any Newfoundland.

Of course my first cast is made at least a minute too soon. My second hits my would-be rescuer deftly on the head, and if his skull were not all the harder, would I fancy pretty well settle the question of any further pursuit of aquatics, or of me, on his part. But your civil-engineer is a hard-headed specimen of humanity, and in spite of my well-intentioned effort at drowning him, Edward Emilius manages to catch my missile as it rebounds, and proceeds to haul upon it. Whereon the other end slides gracefully over the gunwale, and I awaken to the consciousness that I have entirely forgotten the somewhat important detail of making it fast. Fortunately there is another rope in the boat, and this time I manage to redeem such shreds of my reputation for sanity as may still be capable of redemption. There is not a foot to spare, and my derelict is beginning to quicken her pace quite beyond any probable competition from a swimmer in the greater part of the

garments of ordinary high and dry life. But on such spare inches as there are Edward Emilius lays a steadfast grip, and in a couple of minutes more the derelict's head is brought to the wind again, and the chance of a sensational termination to my little tour is at an end.

I wonder what Adolphus can be so anxious to consult our young civil-engineer about next morning. Whatever the cause may be—and I don't think it can be purely a desire for the pleasure of his company in smoking the after-breakfast cigar—the last chop has no sooner disappeared than Emma whisks me off to prepare for the special little business excursion by which the morning of this our day of departure from Bala is to be occupied, and from the window of my bedroom I see, with an astonishment which almost lifts the hat off my head again, my very high-starched brother-in-law and my particularly starchless preserver disappearing with evident intent round the corner of the hotel in an entirely opposite direction.

However, it is not for me to pry into Adolphus's private arrangements—or Mr. Smith's either. Perhaps it is he who wants to consult Adolphus, though I should hardly think that very likely. At all events, there is Emma talking to the guide—who, it is to be hoped, will follow some better compass than his nose, or it will assuredly conduct us no further than the next public-house—and looking up every now and then at my window as who should say: "My dear, there is not the slightest occasion for any extra beautifying of yourself." And as there certainly is not, and would not be if we had fifty young civil-engineers to talk nonsense for us instead of one—or none—I catch up somebody else's parasol, pull the last button off my boot as the most expeditious way of fastening it, and am at Emma's elbow long before our guide, whose rich whisky-mellowed huskiness of throat is admirably adapted for the full development of his native consonants and gutturals, has succeeded in getting her Sassenach tongue to frame even the first two or three syllables of the name of the place to which we are bound.

Rhosygwaliau! How would you like to enquire your way there in a strange country, with no one to vouch for your sanity? And when we get to Rhosygwaliau we have to enquire further for Rhiwaedog! So on the whole perhaps a guide with capacities for the locally vulgar tongue is not altogether a superfluity. Especially as

when we have achieved the geographical portion of our adventure, and through the "meadow of woes"—or of "beds," for authorities differ upon the point, not perhaps sufficiently considering how often the two are synonymous—have found our way safely to the venerable mansion of poor old Llywarch Hen under the shelter of the "bloody cliff," we shall find, as our landlady informs us, that old Llywarch Hen's successors have as little Sassenach as had that unlucky chieftain himself, who, "beautiful poet" as he was, was yet, as our local monitor informs us, compelled by the lamentable lack of scholastic enterprise in the sixth century to "compose his poetry in the vernacular Welsh."

Our errand is a commercial one. The twins are delicate, and have been ordered goat's milk; for which luxury, as it contains about two-thirds the nutriment of the ordinary vaccine article, and is produced at about one-third the cost, our London purveyor naturally does not feel justified in charging much less than five times the price. So the twins lap goat's milk at two shillings the quart, and seem to like it. Now to the Sassenach mind Taffy and his goat are ideas as inseparable as Sandy and his parritch, or Pat and his shillelagh. The first idea, therefore, which had presented itself to Emma's practical mind in connection with our little tour in Wales is—"Maggie, we'll buy a goat."

As yet that felicitous idea has not crystallised into practice. Strange to say, Taffy seems to have given up his goat. We have enquired at Ruabon, and we have enquired at Llangollen. And at Corwen we have actually got so far as to hear of a flock. Only it was a flock that had passed through three weeks before, and was probably then somewhere about Chester, which was a little out of our present beat. And even they were not Welsh goats, but immigrants from the sister isle. But now at last we are assured that at Rhiwaedog we shall find goats in plenty. Only we must buy them in Welsh. So we set off after our bilingual guide, and crossing the railway by the famous bridge, from which he duly points out the classic prospect of the Calvinistic Methodist College, the residence of So-and-So Price, Esq., &c., make our way up a pretty country road which presently crosses a low ridge and dips down again into the picturesque little valley of the Hirnant. And here just on the bank that overhangs the little stream is Rhosygwaliau, a quaint little old-world village, consisting chiefly of

one not very long row of at once the very smallest and very solidest little cottages I ever saw or dreamed of. Their height, I should think, and for the matter of that their length, breadth, and depth likewise, would be calculable only in inches, while the thickness of the walls must surely be reckoned in feet. As for the windows—well, I suppose they are windows, and may very possibly be made to open and shut. But we have no microscope with us.

As for solidity, I doubt if the earthquake has yet been invented that, short of swallowing them whole, would produce the smallest effect upon their almost solid carcasses. I may be wrong in supposing that they have stood here ever since the time of old Llywarch Hen himself, but there can be no doubt of their ability to stand at least twice that time longer.

There are not many of them, however—about one, I should think, to every dozen or so of the jolly, dirty, healthy-looking brats who swarm about their doors, and whose parents must surely be able to give lessons in stowage to the bee or the ant, to say nothing of the sanitary inspector—so we are soon clear of Rhosygwaliau and across the little stone bridge which at its farther end spans the lively little Hirnant. Here we turn sharply to the left, and presently I note that our guide, who has been progressing merrily in front, suddenly becomes punctilious on the question of precedence, and drops respectfully to the rear. At first we fancy we must have taken a wrong turning, and pull up a moment for orders. But this is evidently not our guide's desire. The more we stop the more vehemently he urges us forward, and the more firmness he shows in his polite withdrawal to the rear. And presently, glancing up, we find ourselves at the foot of a picturesque little rock some half-dozen feet high, and on the picturesque little rock, in a picturesque little attitude, a highly picturesque little gentleman in a long beard and shaggy grey coat, whose name is—William!

I think a goat should always have a picturesque little rock on which to attitudeise, not merely because it sets off his personal appearance, but because he himself has so keen a sense of its becomingness as evidently to counterbalance his natural views as to the proper relation between horns and humanity. Not even our guide's red nose, which must be perfectly visible to him in the prudent background, tempts him for a moment to relinquish his post up against the clear blue sky, and when

we reach the old iron-studded door of Rhiwaedog he is still standing as though for his photograph, with head erect and grand grey beard sweeping his shaggy chest, this time against a quaint old gnarly oak almost as old and sturdy and dilapidated as the battered old palace-farmhouse to which it belongs.

I wonder if old Llywarch Hen ever sat in that wonderful old kitchen and hatched his rhymes in his vernacular Welch. A marvellous old house-place it is, grim and dark and ghostly; with its lofty black ceiling, once hung no doubt with harps and swords and tough round raw-hide targets, now rich with savoury bacon and toothsome ham, and its narrow windows high up in the massive walls, and its deep square chimney neuk, with its worn old coat of arms carved deep in the stone chimney front, and the red glow of its turf fire reflected dimly back from long ranges of homely pots and pans that might, for all that eye can see, be the very hauberks and morions that once hung from the grey old walls. There is nothing very poetic in our conversation with the portly dame who now rules the roast at the hearth, which, so far as age goes, might I fancy be the very one where wise young Alfred dreamed his dreams and burned his cakes. Our present discourse turns simply upon the price of nanny-goats and is conducted strictly through the medium of our valiant interpreter, no word of English being forthcoming in the classic kitchen of old Llywarch Hen. And when that important point is duly settled, the hungry-looking but intelligent colley, who has been sniffing suspiciously round our ankles, and muttering to himself all the while in an undertone remarks evidently of an uncomplimentary nature upon the structure of our Sassenach boots, breaks suddenly into good humour at the order to fetch up Nanny for inspection, and is presently careering in ever-narrowing semicircles round and round the astonished flock, who have not the slightest idea of the meaning of being sent for home at this time of day, and whose indignant lord and master turns every now and then in his reluctant course to stamp his foot and lower his great curving horns, and mutter in his shaggy beard vague threats of what he will certainly have to do if this sort of thing be carried on much further.

In another ten minutes our particular Nanny is duly ushered into the little yard and the rest of the nannies dismissed to their dinners again, plaintively ma-a-ing

their disgust at having been disturbed for nothing, and William stands dissatisfied at the gate still muttering affrontedly in his beard, and quite determined not to retreat an inch till he has seen what is going to be done with his spouse.

He is a good-natured fellow after all, is William, despite his muttering, and is only too delighted when after a while I take my courage with both hands and consent to a playful wrestling-match, in which he is chivalrously careful not to put forth too much strength against an antagonist of the softer sex. Has, moreover, a decided sense of humour, and chuckles in his beard as he suddenly leaves me, and trots briskly round to challenge our guide to a similar friendly encounter—a suggestion, as I am positive Master Billy knew beforehand, which commends itself to that worthy not at all. His very nose grows almost pale as the bearded champion comes prancing daintily towards him, and without a word he turns tail, and plunging with a splash through a pleasant brown puddle which Billy perfectly well knew was lying in wait for him in the rear, takes abject refuge behind Mrs. Llywarch's ample skirts. Then William lays his horned head on one side, rears his great shaggy body in the air, and dances wildly on his two sturdy hind-legs. And if he does not laugh outright—as I am quite prepared to maintain he does—it is simply because the rest of us send out such a peal as renders any exertion in that way on his part quite superfluous.

I believe it is he who suggests to Nanny, when we have sufficiently recovered to return to her, that sudden hop on to the top of a six-foot wall which opens so entirely new a view of the contemplated transaction. If this be a specimen of the way in which she is likely to conduct herself in South Belgravia, might it not be as well perhaps to ascertain previously our neighbours' views upon the subject? So, with many compliments to Mrs. Llywarch and her flock, we think that, on the whole, we will send word whether we find it in our power to invest or not. Whereupon, the bargaining being ended, Mrs. Llywarch becomes suddenly endowed with the gift of tongues, and does the honours of her quaint little stone dairy, with its solid stone cheese-press, and its great spherical pats of a mysterious shiny composition which she evidently looks upon as butter, in as good Saxon-English as you might wish to hear.

William is on the look out as we turn our steps homeward, and makes humorous little

feints of attack upon our guide, which keep that valiant individual perpetually dodging backwards and forwards on the safe side of our skirts, whose classic folds he at least would very gladly have seen distended with any amount of crinoline. Then as we reach the final corner we look back once more, and there the vain old rascal is, posing picturesquely on his favourite rock against the clear blue sky.

"Butt me no butts," cries a cheery voice. "No assault been committed, I hope, ladies?" And here, striding gaily along as though no such name as that of Adolphus Styffecote were to be found in the Court Guide or Whittaker's Almanack, comes Edward Emilius—all alone!

Why Emma should look so enquiringly at him, or why his facial muscles should perform an evolution so perilously approaching an absolute wink, I cannot pretend to say. But Edward Emilius is in high spirits, and quite laughs to scorn the idea of our turning homeward at this time in the morning. Adolphus, he says, told him where he should find us, and now he has found us we must positively take a stroll up the valley of the Hirnant and see that remarkable phenomenon of "solitude watching beauty" which our little literary monitor gushingly localises in that favoured glen. Packing to do! Oh, let Emma leave that to him. Packed up for a run half round the world in twenty minutes, has Edward Emilius. At all events, he is quite sure Miss—hem!—Miss Margaret has no portmanteaux to dance upon, and— And so, to my astonishment, it is finally settled, and Emma—my extra-particular sister and chaperon, Emma—who is quite sure that her own arrangements will not admit of her waiting another moment upon the road, actually gives us an hour's leave, and starts us off up the Vale of Hirnant, together!

And a very pretty vale it is, and very rarely can its pleasant woods and sloping green hill-sides, and grey old rocks with the lichens creeping over them, and the tall foxgloves clustering at their feet, have echoed the laughter of a gayer pair of explorers than we are. Or one of us at least. Were such a thing conceivable I should almost be inclined to fancy that, since Emma left us, Edward Emilius had been stricken with a sudden fit of sentimentality. I should be sorry to disturb poor Dolly's peace of mind, but there can be no doubt but that ever since the last flutter of her Tussock skirt vanished round the corner of the bridge our civil-engineer's

flow of spirits seems somehow to have slackened its course. We have not gone a hundred yards before we come to the most wonderful little rickety hanging bridge, leading across the foaming Hirnant to the very quietest and most secluded of all creeper-covered little parsonages, over which my rattling cavalier begins to rhapsodise in the most daring manner. Fortunately my own spirits are in what George would call most tremendous form, and quite capable of supplying nonsense for two. So the rhapsody is cut short in the promptest fashion, and the little creeper-covered parsonage is left to its retirement and its earwigs. What in the world, I wonder, has Mr. Edward Emilius to do with its capabilities for—anything whatever; or I either?

Half a mile further on a lovely little cascade, which comes dancing and leaping down from mossy rock to mossy rock, flinging its tiny rainbows into the bright sunlight, and sprinkling every hanging harebell and feathery fern with glistening diamonds of dew, ends suddenly in the most unromantic of square wooden pipes, from which it at length emerges, silent and subdued, to spend its remaining energies in turning the funniest little water-wheel that surely was ever seen or thought of. The family nutmeg-grater that wheel must set in motion. Sewing-machine or coffee-mill were surely far beyond its powers.

And then comes the final blow under which poor Edward Emilius's romantic fit definitively collapses. We have passed the two little colonies of wood-cutters with their gipsy fires and their tiny white tents; and the camp-stooled artist cunningly installed in the most picturesque corner of the winding path; and the communicative fisherman charitably willing to console himself for the slackness of his own sport by driving that unfortunate civil-engineer to the very verge of desperation with enthusiastic accounts of the gigantic specimens which have fallen to the rods of other whippers of this recalcitrant stream under more favourable auspices. And now at last we reach a combination of rock and tree and river, free alike from fisherman and artist. Time to turn back? Oh, dear, no. A good half-hour to spare, and more. And—look here now. He's not much of a hand at—

But what it is at which Edward Emilius is not much of a hand I am not destined to learn. For at that moment he looks suddenly round, and sees my eye fixed upon a freshly

cut inscription in the grey bark of the sturdy young oak which shelters this favoured nook. What the inscription was I declare at that moment I did not know, being wholly occupied in the endeavour to determine to my own satisfaction, whether the irregularly formed lump artistically skewered upon a very barbed arrow at the head of the legend was intended to represent a couple of hearts or a single kidney.

But the next moment a sotto voce exclamation which I did not clearly catch, but which I fear was not adapted for daily use in infant schools, drew my attention further on, and there, deeply carved in loving juxtaposition beneath the skewered kidney were the classic names of Lizzie Williams and—Edward Smith!

Why Emma should be lying in wait for me when we return; or why she should accompany me so attentively to my own rooms, and kiss me so affectionately, and seem so astonished when I quietly proceed with my packing, which is by no means so advanced as it had pleased Mr. Edward Emilius to assume, I cannot say. Any more than I can say why Edward Emilius, who has been laboriously polite all the way home, and has switched off with his cane the heads of enough wild flowers of every kind to furnish out a Devonshire lane, should suddenly find an exposition of smoke come irresistibly upon him, and be compelled to make the greater part of the journey to Barmouth in the stuffy solitude of a smoking-carriage.

It is a very pretty journey, however, take it how you will; quite the prettiest bit of railway travelling which has as yet come within my limited experience. For the first ten or twelve minutes the line runs along the margin of the lake, reminding Lady Tattenham, who has travelled abroad, and is not by any means ashamed of the exploit, of that sweet little lake, don't we remember—dear, dear, what was the name of it—just before you get to Whatsitsname, you know, Aix-le something or other, on the new Italian road by way of Mont—Mont—dear, dear—the mountain, you know, with the tunnel. So pleasant, don't we find it, these little reminiscences of foreign travel? Not been abroad? Oh, no! How stupid! Of course, we told her so before. But we should—really, we should. And so easy nowadays. Not with those dreadful excursion people, of course, but en—whatsitsname, you know—those dear old shabby carriages with the hooded

place in front and, really, any amount of luggage strapped on behind. So nice and private, you know. And that is what her ladyship likes so much about Wales. Quite pleasantly disappointed she has been. Expected to find it full of all sorts of dreadful personally conducted people, and really now—don't we find—

But here I'm afraid my appreciation of Lady Tattenham's placid little stream of anonymous reminiscence fails. I quite agree with her as to the pleasant privacy of this charming little pocket Switzerland, and the delight of being able to move about without being perpetually hustled by a crowd of cockney tourists such as, by all accounts, encumbers every pass and glacier of the original. The fear of 'Arry "in his thousands" was one of the most prominent objections to the Welsh plan when we originally discussed it. But Wales does not seem "'Arry's form." And great has been our self-congratulation of the fact. But just at this point Woffles, who has been eagerly watching our progress along the lake, making every now and then a wild attempt at self-immolation at the shrine of the railway Juggernaut, only to be baulked by a never-relaxing grip upon her skirts, suddenly claps her hands, and pointing out of the window, turns to me with a laugh of delight and a frantic shriek of—

"Fried Liver!"

And Friday River it is, so far, at least, as Miss Woffles's vivid power of "making belief," and remarkable promptitude in acting up to the faith so evolved, can make it so. I wonder whether Mr. Edward Emilius recognises the scene of the rescue. To judge from the volume of smoke that pours out of the window of the next compartment, I should say not. His attention must be pretty entirely taken up with the manufacture of such a cloud, even if his eyes were able to penetrate it.

Our atmosphere is clear, and very lovely is the ever-shifting panorama that smiles upon us through it. Llannwchllyn is passed now, and on our left rises the lofty double crest of Aran Benllyn and Aran Fawddwy, nearly fifty feet higher than Cader Idris, and within six hundred feet of Snowdon itself, whose majestic slopes some five-and-twenty or thirty crow-flight miles off form the principal feature of a view which from its summit stretches over the better part of North and Central Wales. Now the big hill retires for a while from sight behind the lower but nearer masses

that push their outworks right down to the railway, or draw back a space to make room for a stretch of pasture land with its herds of little handsome Kerry cows, or a prosperous-looking village with its solid stone houses and heavily slated roofs. Then, on the other side, the stream, which at first was almost level with our wheels, has sunk—or seems to sink as we rise above it—into a deep rocky glen, between the steep wall-like cliffs of which it thunders along, now plainly seen as we skirt the giddy bank, now vanishing for a time as the heavy masses of foliage close in completely over it and only the muffled roar comes rolling up to mingle dully with the rattle of our wheels. Then the foliage thins again and presently the rocky bed of the torrent steepens into something almost like a waterfall, and the river and we are on level terms again—a fact of which during the recent rains the "little busy Dee," as Edward Emilius hath it, has not failed to avail itself. That playful neighbour it appears has been improving the shining hour at the company's expense, and now at every few miles as the train first struggles windingly up to the crest of the pass, and then serpentine swiftly down on the other side, a whistle is heard from the watchful driver, and breaks scroop and shriek, and rails smoke, and long trains of sparks fly hissing from beneath the wheels as the train slackens speed to cross some newly-mended gap where the solid part of the road is still somewhat sensationally absent, and we look down straight through the open sleepers and metals into the foaming torrent beneath.

And so the little busy Dee changes as we cross the watershed into the equally busy, and equally mischievous, Mawddach. And Drws y Nant, and Pont Newydd, and Dolgelly itself, once the great stopping-place for tourists before the Barmouth line was opened, and even now a favourite halting-place for pilgrims to Cader Idris and the picturesque glens and trout streams around, are all left behind; and the rocky wooded glen itself has vanished, and the rushing Mawddach itself has become a sober matter-of-fact stream much too narrow for the wide stretch of Penmaen Pool, one half whose miles of firm white sand have been left bare by the falling tide. And now we turn sharply to the right over the long spindly black pier that spans the mouth of the broadened river, and rumbolling through a short black tunnel pop out among the streets of Barmouth.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY R. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER XL. THE DUEL ON THE MOUNT.

THE hunchback conducted them to the extreme summit of the snow mountain, which from the plains assumed the appearance of a sharp peak; but in reality its surface was a level piece of table-land of about twenty yards in circumference. The area was small, but sufficient for the purpose of the combatants, who were aware that for one of them at least life's minutes were numbered. The eastern edge of this plot of land defined the boundary line between earth and air; eternity lay a hair's-breadth beyond it. The outer rocks which faced the sea were there, and a false step would be fatal to him who took it. Ranf pointed out the danger, to which neither Mauvain nor Harold attended. Face to face they stood, holding their naked rapiers, at the points of which death was waiting. But few words passed between these enemies, who once were friends.

"This must be, Harold?" asked Mauvain.

"It must be," replied Harold.

With the full consciousness that only one of the two would depart from that spot alive, Mauvain simply acted on the defensive; the blades crossed and clashed, but Mauvain contented himself with parrying Harold's thrusts. Thus, the combat was one-sided, and in the natural order of things—Harold being a skilful swordsman—could have but one result. It was not long in declaring itself. Harold's rapier found its way almost to Mauvain's heart, and Mauvain staggered and fell to the earth. Harold was instantly by his side, striving to stop the blood which was gushing from the wound.

"It is useless, Harold," said Mauvain, with a tender smile; "you have killed me. I thank God that I die by the hand of a gentleman!"

The mists had rolled away from the mountain, and the Silver Isle lay in radiant beauty beneath them. Mauvain beckoned to Ranf.

"I am not acquainted," he said, pressing his hand to his side, "with the laws of the isle respecting encounters such as this. It may be that Harold will be called upon to answer for my death, if the particulars of the duel come to the knowledge of the islanders. There is no need to enlighten them. You are a clever knave; invent

some story which will divert suspicion from my friend, who, out of a singular quixotism, has brought me to this pass."

"Have you any message," asked Ranf, glancing to the Valley of Lilies, "for Clarice?"

"For Clarice!" exclaimed Mauvain, faintly. His voice came and went, and it was with difficulty he spoke. "You jest!"

"Or for your child?"

"My child!" Surprise gave Mauvain strength, and he partially raised himself, and gazed in bewilderment at the hunchback. "There is no child. She is dead."

"She lives," said Ranf, "as Clarice does."

"Clarice's child!" gasped Mauvain; "is this man mocking me, Harold?"

"He speaks Heaven's truth, Mauvain, as I solemnly believe. But what he knows of Clarice is beyond my comprehension."

"Look below," said Ranf to Harold, pointing to the Valley of Lilies; "if your sight is good, you can distinguish the outlines of my house—no longer mine, but Evangeline's. I had it so built that from this height it should be within view. See—every window of the house is lighted up, as I directed. At this moment, two sisters are meeting, each of whom believed the other dead—two sisters cruelly torn from each other's arms in their youth. Clarice and Margaret are re-united, nevermore, I trust, to be separated on earth. Do you understand me, Mauvain?"

"I understand you, dimly—go on—I have still a few moments' life in me! Is this re-union your work?"

"It is my work. When first, by your help, I brought your daughter, Evangeline, to the Silver Isle——"

"My daughter!—Evangeline! You have a fine sense of humour, hunchback; but you cannot fasten upon me, by any art of yours, a child so hideous. I see your marble image of her now, Harold, and that of this deformed villain, bending over the water in the basin! It will not do, hunchback. Hold me a moment, Harold; I am fainting! I want to live to hear the end of this clever knave's monstrous invention."

From a flask which Ranf handed to him Harold touched the lips of Mauvain and bathed his forehead, and presently the dying man opened his eyes.

"I remember what has passed, Harold; let me hear the rest quickly."

"I deceived you, Mauvain," said Harold; "Evangeline is the most beautiful maiden

on the Silver Isle. It was chiefly for this reason that I wished to destroy the group I cut for you."

"Why did you deceive me?"

"I loved Clarice, and, suspecting the truth when I first beheld the child you believed to be Ranf's, I welcomed the opportunity you unconsciously offered to her of growing to womanhood surrounded by more innocent and peaceful influences than those among which we moved."

"So—we are quits, then—you deceived me, as I deceived you. And the child lives—and is beautiful! I thank you, friend. See how easily I forgive you for your deceit, Harold; forgive me for mine!"

"I no longer bear resentment, Mauvain; I forgive you."

"You remove a cloud from my heart, Harold. Hunchback, if you are not speedy with your tale, I shall have to learn it for myself in the world of spirits."

"When, by your help," said Ranf, "I brought your daughter, Evangeline, to the Silver Isle, and placed her in the care of her mother's sister, Margaret Sylvester, I (not fully knowing the truth at the time) had no expectation or hope that such a happy ending would be reached as we have reached this night."

"Mine, for one," said Mauvain, with a grim faint laugh; "you phrase well, hunchback."

"But chance placed in my hands the clue to a mystery which I determined, if possible, to solve, and Nature gave me the means to compass my desire. Such wealth is mine, Mauvain, which you have never dreamed of, and by its aid agents have been working for me in the old land, leading me to the discovery of Clarice, who was brought to the isle two days since, and is now with her sister Margaret and her child, Evangeline, in the house I built for them in the Valley of Lilies. There is no more to tell."

"And no time to tell it," said Mauvain, his voice growing fainter and fainter. "Harold, when you see Clarice say that I am dead, and ask her to think kindly of me if she can. And for my child—what can I have to say to her? She owes me nothing that I would wish her to repay. She is beautiful, you tell me, Harold—so was Clarice, the fairest and most beautiful! Hunchback, you have won the game; Evangeline will hold you in kinder remembrance than she will the man who betrayed—that is the word, is it not?—her mother. . . . There is a strange haze

over the sky. . . . Harold, give me your hand."

"It is in yours, Mauvain," said Harold, lowering his head so that he might catch Mauvain's last words.

"I noticed that your left arm was hurt, Harold—does it pain you?"

"Not much, Mauvain."

"You were right when you said that our life on the isle was likely to be attended with excitement and amusement. . . . This blood chokes me. I really believe, if Clarice were here, that I should ask her to kiss me. I should like to see Evangeline, too—what a trick you played me! It is growing dark, is it not? Do you know, Harold, that there is not a being on earth I cling to as I cling to you—for I love you—in my way! Nothing very desirable, but it is so. When you left me yesterday morning, I felt as if the best part of my life had gone from me. . . . Harold, who is it standing before me, looking downwards to the valley?"

"It is Ranf."

"He stands between me and the light. Go to his side, and tell me if you can see the house which contains Clarice and Margaret and my—my daughter, Evangeline. Go—quickly!"

Harold obeyed him, and moved to Ranf's side. He was gone for but a moment—and when he set his face towards the spot upon which his friend had been lying, Mauvain had disappeared!

"Ranf!" cried Harold.

The hunchback turned, and divined what had occurred. He leant over the eastern edge of the peak, and saw the lifeless body of Mauvain falling from rock to rock.

"Farewell, Mauvain," he murmured. "So ends the comedy of your life."

Harold shuddered as he gazed upon the snow, stained with Mauvain's life's blood.

"Heaven have mercy upon him," he said, "and upon me!"

Fascinated by the stains of blood and by the events of the night, he stood for many minutes in silence, until Ranf gently touched his arm.

"Come," said Ranf.

"Where?" asked Harold.

"To my hut. Did you not say that I had robbed you of the sweetest comfort that was ever offered to the heart of an unhappy man?"

"Ah, true. Margaret Sylvester. Yet I cannot go to her, to vindicate myself, for I have a duty here to perform which must be done to-night, at all hazards."

"What duty?"

"Do you think that I shall allow Mauvain's body to lie unburied on the beach below? It would weigh as a sin upon my soul through all my days."

"How do you propose to reach the beach?"

"I shall find a way."

"Certain death is yours, if you attempt it."

"That will not deter me," said Harold scornfully. "I know what it is right for a man to do."

"Only one man in the isle can show you the way to its accomplishment."

"That man is yourself. I am prepared for your answer."

"You are right. That man is myself. Sculptor Harold, from whose grave did you obtain those flowers in your breast, of which you are so tender?"

"From the grave of Bertha's child. I went last night to your house in the valley, on the chance of finding you there, and compelling you to do me justice in Margaret Sylvester's eyes. I did not enter, but waited until I heard a human sound. I saw Bertha, and spoke with her. She told me you were here. Before I left her, I asked her for these flowers, as a kind of comfort to me on my way. She gave them to me, willingly. Nay, more; she gave me her hand, and I held it in mine. You see, Ranf, I was not entirely forsaken."

"I have done you great wrong. Will you take my hand?"

"Willingly. The wrong you did was unintentional. From this moment we are friends."

"It is said, and sealed." The two men grasped each other firmly by the hand. "I will help you to your wish. I know a way down the mountain, and I will show you a cave of wonders, a cave paved with golden sand, by means of which I have been enabled to restore Clarice to her sister's arms."

"Nothing will surprise me, Ranf. I am curious to know why you choose to remain here, alone, instead of being present at the meeting of the sisters."

"I should have been but a clog on their happiness. It would have been as if I said: 'Here am I here who have accomplished this wonder; pay me tribute.' It would have been a shock to Clarice, who has seen me but once (you seem to forget what kind of man I am to the outward eye), and who would not have understood.

No. Such a meeting is sacred; heart must speak to heart, soul to soul. It would have been the very essence of selfishness had I intruded myself."

"You speak like a man—no, rather like a woman, for you have a woman's delicacy. Ranf, is it low tide?"

"Yes," replied Ranf, knowing the thought that prompted the question. "But first, come with me to my hut. I have to send a message to Margaret Sylvester."

"You are a magician."

"Because of my white doves? Think, rather, that they are heaven's messengers. I have two in my hut which have been trained to fly between the mount and my house in the valley. Bertha, who is ever on the alert—no more grateful woman ever drew Nature's breath—will receive it, and carry it to the sisters, and thus you will hold this night a place in their perfect happiness."

The message which Ranf wrote, and tied under the pigeon's wing, ran thus:

"From Ranf to Margaret Sylvester:

"You know already from the lips of your sister Clarice that an unintentional wrong has been done to Harold the sculptor. You know that Mauvain was the man who wronged her. Harold is with me now, and Mauvain will never trouble you more. Harold and I are friends till death. I have asked his pardon for the wrong I did him, in causing you to withdraw your sympathy and friendship from him. I honour and love him. You will do so when you know him as I now know him. Our love to you, and all."

Harold and Ranf watched the flight of the white dove towards the Valley of Lilies, and Harold thought:

"The message will be read by the sisters in the midst of their happiness. I share it with them. Undeserving as I am, a great joy is mine!"

* * * * *

"I honour and love him. You will do so when you know him as I now know him."

But it was never to be, on earth! In their mortal shape they were never to meet again!

* * * * *

"All is ready," said Ranf; "let us start. The tide is beginning to rise."

"I have a fancy," said Harold; "you have another pigeon which, being released, will wing its way to your house in the valley?"

"Yes."

"Bring it with you; it is but a fancy, but you will indulge me."

"Willingly," and Ranf strapped to his back the small basket containing the pigeon. "Now we are ready."

On their way Ranf narrated how, some years ago, in his eagerness to obtain a rare flower, he had slipped over the precipice, and had nearly met his death; and how, being saved by a tree which grew outwards to the sea, he had discovered a means to reach the shore which lay thousands of feet beneath them. Harold scarcely attended to Ranf's narration; he was thinking with sadness of the body of Mauvain lying on the sands below.

"What was it you told me awhile ago?" asked Harold listlessly. "A cave of wonders, paved with golden sand?"

"It is so," replied Ranf; "beneath us, within reach of man's hands, lies the wealth of a kingdom."

"You might have achieved rare things, Ranf, with such power in your possession."

"I have achieved what I desired," said Ranf; "the happiness of the being I love. In the knowledge that that is secured, I could almost be content never to see her again on earth. There is a Hereafter; this life is but as a passing breath." They had reached the point from which the chain depended sheer over the rocks which faced the sea. "We have to descend by this chain. It is firm, and will not break. The danger is in the man. Will you risk it?"

"There is a Hereafter, Ranf, as you say. Fear of death will not deter me from the execution of my purpose."

"You had best go first; when you reach the bottom of the chain you will find an opening into which you can swing yourself. The reason that I send you before me is that I can help you from above. Let me wind this rope around your breast and waist. So! It is done. You can trust your full weight to the rope; if you miss your hold of the chain, I shall have you safe; the rope is twice the length of the chain, and my strength will be sufficient. You will to a certainty be bruised and cut, but you will not mind a scratch or two. You will find steps hewn here and there in the rocks; take advantage of them, and do not look downwards."

Harold unhesitatingly committed himself to the perilous enterprise; step by step he descended, with his teeth firmly clenched to prevent himself from expressing the agony he was enduring—for his wounded arm smarted terribly in the strain to which

it was subjected. The cheery voice of Ranf did much to strengthen and encourage him, but by the time he reached the end of the chain and had swung himself into the opening of the rocks, his strength was gone; and when Ranf joined him, he was lying on the ground, bleeding and exhausted. Ranf had come prepared, and the contents of his flask helped to revive the fainting man.

"Shall we go on?" asked Ranf.

"While I have a breath of life in me," replied Harold, "I will not turn; not a conscious moment must be wasted. Come, I am stronger now."

And, indeed, the colour returned to his cheek; his strong will, so rarely exercised, enabled him to conquer his pain. With his hand in Ranf's he followed the hunchback into the dark tunnels of the mountain. When the light of the moon was shut out, Ranf lighted a torch, which threw a lurid glare on the downward path. Descending and ever descending they walked slowly on, until they reached the cleft in the rock through which they obtained a view of the sea.

"The aspect of the night has changed," said Harold; "should the moon be now in the sky?"

"Aye," said Ranf, "for at least two hours yet."

"It is hidden. Darkness is falling on the waters; they are strangely troubled."

Ranf looked out; he understood the signs. The sea was rolling heavily, and a threatening murmur was in the air.

He had had experiences of such storms as that which was now approaching, and he knew that the danger of the enterprise upon which they were engaged was increased tenfold by the signs he saw and heard; but he knew also that no persuasion could induce Harold to falter in his purpose. So in silence they resumed their way. There were other openings in the mount as they descended, but no light came through them; a deep darkness was on earth and air and sea. "The storm will break presently," thought Ranf.

"What is that sound, Ranf?"

"It is the sound of falling water," said Ranf, kneeling to loosen a chain fastened to the rocks; "when I first heard it, in the past, I thought it sweetest music. Hold!" he cried, as Harold, in his eagerness, advanced a step beyond him. "We are on the edge of a chasm, which we must descend by means of this chain. Let me fasten the rope about you again. Keep a

firm grasp on the chain, and trust blindly to it and me; it is but fifty feet down. Now!"

In a few minutes Harold had descended the chasm, and reached a point of safety. As his foot touched the solid rock, a flash of lightning pierced the chasm, filling it with vivid light, and he realised the danger he had escaped. In the same moment he saw Ranf scrambling down the chain.

"Hark!" cried Ranf, standing by Harold's side.

A terrible peal of thunder broke over the sea; the sound rushed into the chasm with awful import, and lingered there, threateningly, long after it had died out of the open space beyond. A great exaltation possessed Harold's being as he listened to Nature's mighty voice. Every pulse in his body beat with spiritual excitement.

"Destiny must have led you to the discovery of this path," he said to Ranf.

"It seemed so to me when I first trod it," replied Ranf; "destiny may be leading us now to something more certain than what has yet befallen us."

"To what?"

"To death!"

"What matters?" exclaimed Harold, with a wild wave of his hand. "Our work in life is over."

"True. Our work is over. Harold, you are covered with blood. You must be in terrible pain."

"I feel none. The littleness and the agony of life are worth suffering when they lead to such a moment as this. Almighty God! With what sublimity the dark waves rush upon the eternal rocks below! And Mauvain—where is he?"

"We may know soon," said Ranf quietly.

Slowly and laboriously they pursued their way until they reached a point from which they overlooked the wondrous caves along the shore. Harold could but dimly trace their outlines. They were wrapt in darkness.

The heavens were overcast with sullen cloud. The tide was rising, and the sea was lashed to fury.

"What now, Harold?" asked Ranf.

"I must descend to the shore, to seek for Mauvain's body. It would fall at this point?"

"Yonder," said Ranf, taking Harold's right arm, and extending it towards the east, "in front of those monstrous masses of seaweed which are curling furiously upwards——"

His words were arrested by the breaking of the storm. The lightning darted into the brown, writhing coils; deafening peals of thunder instantaneously followed, and the rain poured down in a mighty flood.

"They look like an army of giant serpents convulsed in a supreme death-struggle," said Harold.

"The eastern edge of the summit of the mountain over which Mauvain fell, is in a direct line with that spot. It is madness to attempt to recover the body. If it is not dashed to pieces, it is already carried out to sea."

"You promised to help me."

"I do not retract. It is for you now to direct what is to be done."

"You see I have kept the rope about my body. I shall venture to that spot; you can prevent me from being carried out to sea if you will wind the end of the rope around you. You want a resistant point; you cannot obtain it on these rocks."

"You have heard the legend of the snow mountain, with which the Evangeline who died two centuries ago is connected?"

"Yes."

So fearful was the storm that the men were compelled to speak in whispers, with their faces almost touching.

"A few feet below us—— Wait till the lightning comes—— There! you saw that huge mass of wood fixed in the crevices of the rocks?"

"Yes."

"It is the Cross carved out of a pine-tree by the man who slew his brother, and wrecked the happiness of an innocent girl's life. I can obtain my resistant point there—I can cling to an arm of the Cross, holding the rope, while you go outward on your wild unreasonable quest. There is not a moment to be lost. The tide is rising fast, and the storm has not yet reached its height."

Swiftly they descended to the sands, with the waves dashing furiously upon them. Ranf, clinging with all his strength to the Cross, and with the end of the rope wound round his waist, gave the word to Harold to speed.

Almost blinded by the water, but indomitable in his resolve, Harold ran out towards the rock, above which the monstrous coil of sea-weed curled and reared. The receding waves afforded him a few moments' respite, and he wiped the water from his eyes, and looked eagerly around. At first he saw no trace of Mauvain's body, but as the waves rolled inwards to the

golden caves, he fancied he saw a shapeless form in a crevice; he darted forward wildly, and was instantly engulfed in the furious rush of the sea.

So fierce and sudden was the movement that he dragged Ranf from his shelter, and the next moment they were fighting for dear life. They were dashed against and over the rocks, and were terribly wounded—wounded even to death's point. But Ranf, in the blind delirium of his struggles, preserved some kind of consciousness, and clinging with desperation and with the strength of a giant to the rocks, he prevented himself from being carried out to sea. Taking advantage of the seaward roll of the waves, he crawled inwards to the golden caves, dragging Harold with him. He regained his shelter, and then, with his life ebbing from him, he slowly hauled in the rope, and with it Harold's body. He pressed it close to him, and almost by a miracle, succeeded in climbing with his lifeless burden into an arm of the Cross, where they were safe from the rush of the merciless sea. Almost on the instant the fury of the storm began to pass away, and in a little while the heavens were bright again with calm and beautiful clouds.

* * * * *

Harold moved, and languidly opened his eyes.

"In this world," he thought, "or the next?"

A whisper reached him.

"Harold!"

"Ah, Ranf! Alive?"

Their voices were very faint.

"It is as much as I can say; life is going quickly. And you?"

"We are comrades; I cannot live another hour."

"Good-night, then."

"Not yet. . . . Ranf!"

"Yes."

"You have the dove with you?"

Ranf feebly moved his hand to his back; the basket was there, and he felt the fluttering of the pigeon's wings.

"It is here, Harold."

"Have you strength to write a word to our friends in the Valley of Lilies?"

The question—the intention conveyed in it—gave him the strength.

"I can do it, Harold."

"You have no paper."

"Yes—wrapt in an oilskin. . . . have always carried it about me. . . . What shall I write?"

"Farewell. From Ranf and Harold, friends in death. We shall meet in the Hereafter."

With difficulty the words were traced. By a supreme effort Ranf took the dove, scarcely alive, from the basket, and attached the message beneath its wing. He pressed his lips to the bird, and placed it to Harold's lips. Then he set it free.

In the fresh pure air, the bird soon regained its strength. In a few moments it was gone—on its way to the Valley of Lilies where Margaret and Clarice were sleeping in each other's arms!

* * * * *

The sun rose above the eastern horizon. A blush tinged the bosom of the Silver Sea.

"Harold!"

"Aye."

"I was wrong. . . . I said Good-night. . . . Can you see the light of the rising sun?"

"I do not know. . . . I see a light, thank God! but it is in my soul, not in my eyes. Good-morning, friend!"

"Good-morning, friend!"

* * * * *

The sea was bathed in rosy light, and the sun shone upon the white faces of Harold and Ranf as they lay in the Cross fixed in the golden caves!

THE END.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

ASPHODEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VICKI," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER IX. "OF COLOUR PALE AND DEAD WAS SHE."

"AND so you are Daphne?" said Mr. Goring, taking both her hands, and looking at her with an amused smile, not without tender admiration of the fair pale face and widely-opened blue eyes. Months afterwards he remembered the scared look in those lovely eyes, the death-like pallor of the complexion; but just now he ascribed Daphne's evident agitation to a school-girl's natural discomfiture at being found out in a risky escapade. "And so you are Daphne?" he repeated. "Why, you told me your father was a grocer in Oxford Street. Was not that what school-boys call a crumper?"

"No," said Daphne, recovering herself, and a sparkle of mischief lighting up her eyes; "it was strictly true—of Martha Dibb's father."

"And you adopted your friend's parent for the nonce; a strictly Roman custom that of adoption, and in harmony with your Roman name. By the way, were you christened Poppæa Daphne, or Daphne Poppæa?"

He had been amusing himself with the squirrel for the last half-hour; but he found Daphne's embarrassment ever so much more amusing than the squirrel. He felt no more seriously about the one than about the other.

"Don't," exclaimed Daphne; "you must have known quite well from the first moment that my name wasn't Poppæa, just as well as I knew that yours wasn't Nero."

"Well, I had a shrewd suspicion that you were romancing about the name; but I swallowed the grocer. That was too bad of you. Do you know that you made me quite unhappy? I was miserable at the idea that such a girl as you could be allied with grocery. A ridiculous prejudice, was it not, in a man whose father began life as a day-labourer?"

Daphne had sunk into a low chair by the squirrel's cage, and was feeding that pampered favourite with the green points of some choice conifer. She seemed more taken up by his movements than by her future brother-in-law. Her agitation had passed, yet she was pale still, only the faintest bloom in her fair cheek, the pink of a wild-rose.

"Please don't tell Lina," she pleaded, with her eyes on the squirrel.

"Oh, she doesn't know anything about it then?"

"Not a word. I dared not tell her. When I tried to do so, I became suddenly aware how horridly I had behaved. Martha Dibb and I were silly, thoughtless creatures, acting on the impulse of the moment."

"I don't think there was much impulse about Miss Dibb," said Mr. Goring; "it seemed to me that she only looked on."

"It is disgustingly mean of you to say that!" exclaimed Daphne, recurring to her school-girl phraseology, which she had somewhat modified at South Hill.

"Forgive me. And I must really hold my tongue about our delicious picnics? Of course I shall obey you, little one. But I hate secrets, and I am a bad hand at keeping them. I shall never forget those two happy days at Fontainebleau. How strange that you and I, who were destined to

become brother and sister, should make each other's acquaintance in that haphazard, informal fashion. It seemed almost as if we were fated to meet, didn't it?"

"Was that the fate you read in my hand?"

"No," he answered, suddenly grave; "that was not what I read. Pshaw!" he added in a lighter tone, "chiromancy is all nonsense. Why should a man, not too much given to belief in the things that are good for him to believe, pin his faith on a fanciful science of that kind? I have left off looking at palms ever since that day at Fontainebleau. And now tell me about your sister. I am longing to see her. To think that I should have stumbled on just the one particular afternoon on which she was to be so long away! I pictured her sitting by yonder bamboo table, like Penelope waiting for her Odysseus. Do you know that I have come straight through from Bergen without stopping?"

"And you have not been home to your Abbey?"

"My Abbey will keep. By-the-bye, how is the place looking—the gardens in all their beauty, I suppose?"

"I have never seen it."

"Never! Why, I thought Lina would be driving over once or twice a week to survey her future domain. I take it positively unkind that you have never seen my abbey: my cloisters, where never monk walked; my refectory, where never monk eat; my chapel, where nobody ever worshipped. I should have thought curiosity would have impelled you to go and look at Goring Abbey. It is such a charming anomaly. But it pleased my poor father to build it, so I must not complain."

"I think you ought to be very proud of it when you consider how hard your father must have worked for the money it cost," said Daphne bluntly.

"Yes; William Giles had to put a long career of honest labour behind him, before he became William Goring and owner of Goring Abbey. He was a good old man. I feel sorry sometimes that I am not more like him."

"Lina says you are like your mother."

"Yes; I believe I resemble her side of the house. It was by no means the more meritorious side, for the Heronvilles were always loose fish, while my father was one of the best men who ever wore shoe-leather. Do you think Lina will be pleasantly surprised by my return?"

"Do I think it!" echoed Daphne. "Why,

she has been longing for your coming—counting every hour. I know that, though she has not said as much. I can read her thoughts."

"Clever little puss. Daphne, do you know I am quite delighted to find that my grocer's daughter of Fontainebleau Forest is to be my new sister."

"You are very good," returned Daphne rather stiffly. "It's eight o'clock, so I think, if you'll excuse me, I had better go and dress for dinner."

"Wait till your people come home. I've ever so many questions to ask."

"There is the carriage! You can ask them of Lina herself."

She ran out of the room by the glass door leading into the conservatory, leaving Mr. Goring to meet his betrothed at the opposite door. She ran through the conservatory to the garden. The sun was sinking in a sea of many-coloured clouds, yonder above the hills, and the river at the bottom of the valley ran between the rushes like liquid gold. Daphne stood on the sloping lawn staring at the light like a bewildered creature.

She stood thus for some minutes motionless, with clasped hands, gazing at the sunset. Then she turned and walked slowly back to the house. There was no one to watch her, no one to think of her at this moment. Gerald and Lina were together in the drawing-room, steeped in the rapture of reunion.

"Let me be rational, let me be reasonable if I can," Daphne said to herself. She re-entered the house by an obscure door at the east end, and went up to her own room. There, in the soft evening light, she cast herself upon her knees by the bed, and prayed: prayed with all the fervour of her untried soul, prayed that she might be kept from temptation and led to do the thing that was right. Prayer so earnest in a nature so light and reckless was a new experience. She rose from her knees like a new creature, and fancied she had plucked the evil weed of a fatal fancy out of her heart. She moved about her room calmly and quietly, dressed herself carefully, and went back to the drawing-room, two minutes before the half-hour, radiant and smiling.

Madoline was still in the gown she had worn at the déjeuner. She had taken off her hat, and that was all, too happy in her lover's company to spare five minutes for the revision of her toilet. Gerald had done nothing to improve his travelling attire.

Even the dust of the long railroad journey from Hull was still upon his clothes.

"Gerald tells me that you and he have made friends already, Daphne," said Lina in a happy voice.

She was standing by her lover's side in front of the open window, while Sir Vernon sat in a distant easy-chair devouring his Times, and trying to make up for the lost hours since the post came in.

"Yes; Daphne and I have sworn eternal friendship," exclaimed Gerald gaily. "We mean to be a most devoted brother and sister. It was quite wonderful how quickly we broke the ice, and how thoroughly at home we became in a quarter of an hour."

"Daphne is not a very terrible personage," said Madoline, smiling at her sister's bright young face. "Well, darling, had you a happy day all by yourself? I was almost glad you were not with us. The coming of age was a very tiresome business. I had ten times rather have been in our own gardens with you."

"The whole entertainment was ineffably dull," said Sir Vernon, without looking from his paper.

And now the well-bred butler glided across the threshold, and gently insinuated that dinner was served if it might be the pleasure of his people to come and eat it: whereupon Mr. Goring gave his arm to Madoline, and Sir Vernon for the first time since his younger daughter's return felt himself constrained to escort her to the dining-room, or leave her to follow in his wake like a lap-dog.

He deliberated for a moment or two as to which he should do, then made a hook of his elbow, and looked down at her dubiously, as much as to say that she might take it or leave it.

Daphne would have much liked to refuse the proffered boon, but she was in a dutiful mood to-night, so she meekly slipped her little gloved hand under her parent's sleeve, and walked by his side to the dining-room, where he let her hand drop directly they were inside the door.

Everyone at South Hill hated a glare, so the dining-room, like the drawing-room, was lighted by moderator lamps under velvet shades. Two large brazen lamps with deep-fringed purple shades hung a little way above the table; two more lighted the side-board. The French windows stood wide open, and across a balcony full of flowers appeared the shadowy landscape and the cool evening sky.

Sir Vernon was tired and out of spirits.

He had very little to say about anything except the proceedings of the afternoon, and all his remarks upon the hospitalities at which he had assisted were of an abusive character. He could eat no dinner, his internal economy having been thrown altogether out of gear by the barbarity of a solid meal at three o'clock. His discontent would have effectually damped the spirits of any human beings except lovers. Those privileged beings inhabit a world of their own, so Madoline and Gerald smiled at each other, and talked to each other across the roses and lilies that beautified the dinner-table, and seemed unconscious that anything unpleasant was going on.

Daphne watched them thoughtfully. How lovely her sister looked in the new light of this perfect happiness—how unaffectedly she revealed her delight at her lover's return!

"How good it was of you to come back a month sooner than you had promised, Gerald," she said.

"My dear girl, I have been pining to come home for the last six months, but, as you and your father and I had chalked out a certain portion of Europe which I was to travel over, I thought I ought to go through with it; but if you knew how heartily sick I am of going from pillar to post, of craning my neck to look at the roofs of churches, and dancing attendance upon grubby old sacristans, and riding up narrow pathways on mules, and having myself and my luggage registered through from the bustling commercial city I am sick of to loathing after twenty-four hours' experience, to the sleepy mediæval town which I inevitably tire of in ten, you would be able to understand my delight in coming back to you and placid Warwickshire. By-the-bye, why didn't you take Daphne to see the Abbey? She tells me she has never been over to Goring."

"I should have had no pleasure in showing her your house"—"Our house," interjected Gerald—"while you were away."

"Well, dearest, it was a loving fancy, so I won't scold you for it. We'll have a——" He paused for an instant, looking at Daphne with a mischievous smile. "We'll have a picnic there to-morrow."

"Why a picnic?" grumbled Sir Vernon. "I can understand people eating out of doors when they have no house to shelter them, but nobody but an idiot would squat on the grass to dine if he could get at chairs and tables. Look at your gipsies and hawkers now—you never catch them

picnicking. If their tent or their caravan is ever so small and stuffy they feed inside it."

"Never mind the hawkers," exclaimed Gerald contemptuously. "A fig for common-sense. Of course, everybody in his senses knows that such a dinner as this is much more comfortable than the most perfect picnic that ever was organised. But, for all that, I adore picnics, and we'll have one to-morrow, won't we, Daphne."

He looked across the table at her in the subdued lamp-light, smiling, and expecting to see a responsive smile in her eyes: but she was preternaturally grave.

"Just as you like," she said.

"Just as I like! What a chilling repulse. Why, unless Madoline and you approve of the idea, I don't care a straw for it. I'll punish you for your indifference, Miss Daphne. You shall have a formal luncheon in the refectory, at a table large enough for thirty, and groaning under my father's family plate—Garrard's, of the reign of Victoria, strictly ponderous and utilitarian. What a lovely light there is in the western sky," said Gerald, as Madoline and her sister rose from the table. "Shall we all walk down to the river, before we join Sir Vernon in the billiard-room? You'd like to try your hand against me, sir, I suppose, now that I come fresh from benighted lands where the tables have no pockets."

"Yes; I'll play a game with you presently."

Gerald and the two girls went into the verandah, and thence by a flight of shallow steps to the lawn. It was a peerless night after a peerless day. A young moon was shining above the topmost branches of the deodaras, and touching the Avon with patches of silvery-light. The scene was lovely, the atmosphere delicious, but Daphne felt that she was one too many, though Madoline had linked an arm through hers. Those two had so much to talk about, so many questions to ask each other.

"And you have really come home for good," said Madoline.

"For good, dearest; for the brightest fate that can befall a man, to marry the woman he loves and settle down to a peaceful placid life in the home of his—ancestor. I have been a rover quite long enough, and I shall rove no more except at your command."

"There are places I should love to visit with you, Gerald—Switzerland, Italy, the Tyrol."

"We will go wherever you please, dearest. It will be delightful to me to show you all that is fairest on this earth, and to hear you say, when we are hunting vainly for some undiscovered nook where we may escape from the tourist herd—'After all, there is no place like home.'"

"I shall only be too much inclined to say that. I love our own county, and the scenery I have known all my life."

"We must start early to-morrow, Lina. We have a great deal of business to get through at the Abbey."

"Business!"

"Yes, dear; I want you to give me your ideas about the building of new hot-houses. With your passion for flowers the present amount of glass will never be enough. What do you say to sending MacCloskie over to meet us there? His opinion as a practical man might be of use."

"If Mr. MacCloskie is going to picnic with you I'll stay at home," said Daphne. "I admire the gentleman as a gardener, but I detest him as a human being."

"Don't be frightened, Daphne," said Gerald, laughing. "It is a levelling age, but we have not yet come to picnicking with our gardeners."

"Mr. MacCloskie is such a very superior person, I don't know what he might expect."

They had strolled down to the meadow by the river, a long stretch of level pasture, richly timbered, divided from the gardens by a ha-ha, over which there was a light iron bridge. They lingered for a little while by this bridge, looking across at the river.

"Do you know that Daphne has started a boat," said Madoline, "and has become very expert with a pair of sculls. She rowed me down to Stratford the day before yesterday, and back against the stream."

"Indeed! I congratulate you on a delightful accomplishment, Daphne. I don't see why girls should not have their pleasure out of the river as well as boys. I've a brilliant idea. The Abbey is only five miles up the river. Suppose we charter Daphne's boat for to-morrow. I can pull a pretty good stroke, and the distance will be easy between us two. Will your boat hold three of us comfortably, do you think, Daphne?"

"It would hold six."

"Then consider your services retained for to-morrow. I shall enjoy the miniature prettiness of the Avon, after the mightier streams I have been upon lately."

"I don't suppose Lina would like it," faltered Daphne, not appearing elated at the idea.

"Lina would like it immensely," said her sister. "I shall feel so safe if you are with us, Gerald. What a strange girl you are, Daphne! A week ago you were eager to carry me to the end of the world in your boat."

"You can have the boat, of course, if you like, and I'll pull if you want me," returned Daphne, somewhat ungraciously; "but I think you'll find five miles of the Avon rather a monotonous business. It is a very lovely river if you take it in sections, but as both banks present a succession of green fields and pollard willows, it is just possible for the human mind to tire of it."

"Daphne, you are an absolute cynic—and at seventeen," exclaimed Gerald, with pretended horror. "What will you be by the time you are forty?"

"If I am alive I daresay I shall be a very horrid old woman," said Daphne. "Perhaps something after the pattern of Aunt Rhoda. I can't conceive anything much worse than that."

"Papa will be waiting for his game of billiards," said Lina. "We had better hurry back to the house."

They were met on the threshold of the conservatory by Mrs. Ferrers. That lady had a wonderful knack of getting acquainted with everything that happened at South Hill. If there had been a semaphore on the roof she could hardly have known things sooner.

"My dear Gerald, what a delightful surprise you have given us," she exclaimed. "I put on my hat the instant the rector had said grace. I left him to eat his dessert alone—a thing that has not happened since we were married—and walked over to bid you welcome. How well you are looking; how very brown you have grown! I am so glad to see you."

"It was very good of you to come over on purpose, Mrs. Ferrers."

"May I not be Aunt Rhoda instead of Mrs. Ferrers? I should like it ever so much better. Next year I shall be really your aunt, you know."

"And the rector will be your uncle," said Daphne pertly. "He is mine already, and he is ever so much kinder than when I was only his parishioner."

Mrs. Ferrers shot a piercing look, half angry, half interrogative, at her younger niece. The rector had showed a reprehensible tendency to praise the girl's beauty,

had on one occasion gone so far as to offer her a patriarchal kiss, from which Daphne had recoiled involuntarily, saying afterwards to her sister that "one must draw the line somewhere."

"Vernon has gone to bed," said Aunt Rhoda; "he felt thoroughly wearied out after the gathering at Holmsley, which seems from his account to have been a very dull business. I am glad the rector and I declined. A cold luncheon is positive death to him."

"Then we needn't go indoors yet awhile," said Gerald. "It is lovely out here. Shall I fetch a wrap for you, Lina?"

Mrs. Ferrers was carefully draped in her China-rape shawl, one of Madoline's wedding gifts to her aunt, and costly enough for a royal present.

"Thanks. There is a shawl on a sofa in the drawing-room."

"Let Daphne fetch it," interjected Mrs. Ferrers; and her niece flew to obey, while the other three sauntered slowly along the broad terrace in front of the windows.

There were some light iron chairs and a table at one end of the walk, and here they seated themselves to enjoy the summer night.

"As our English summer is a matter of about five weeks, broken by a good deal of storm and rain, we ought to make the most of it," remarked Gerald. "I hope we shall have a fine day for the Abbey to-morrow."

"You are going to take Lina to the Abbey?"

"Yes, for a regular business-like inspection; that we may see what will have to be improved, or altered, or added, or done away with before next year."

"How interesting! I should like so much to drive over with you. My experience in housekeeping matters might possibly be of use."

"Invaluable, no doubt," answered Gerald, with his easy-going, half listless air; "but we must postpone that advantage until the next time. We are going in Daphne's boat, which will only comfortably hold three," said Gerald, with a calm contempt for actual truth which horrified Madoline, who was rigidly truthful even in the most trivial things.

"Going in Daphne's boat! What an absurd idea!"

"Don't say that, Aunt Rhoda, for it's my idea," remonstrated Gerald.

"But I can't help saying it. When you have half-a-dozen carriages at your disposal, and when the drive to Goring is absolutely lovely, to go in a horrid little boat."

"It is a very nice boat, Aunt Rhoda, and Daphne manages it capitally," said Lina.

"I think it will be a delightful, dreamy way of going," said Gerald. "We shall take our time about it. There is no reason we should hurry. I shall order a carriage to meet us at the bottom of Goring Lane, where we shall land. If we prefer to drive home, we can do so."

"My dear Gerald, you and Madoline are the best judges of what is agreeable to yourselves, but I cannot help thinking that you are encouraging Daphne in a most unbecoming pursuit."

The appearance of Daphne herself with the shawl put a stop to the argument. She folded the soft woollen wrap round her sister, and then stooped to kiss her.

"Good-night, Lina," she said.

"Going to bed so early, Daphne? I hope you are not ill."

"Only a little tired after my rambles. Good-night, Aunt Rhoda; good-night, Mr. Goring," and Daphne ran away.

"Aunt Rhoda might drive over and meet us at Goring, Gerald," suggested Madoline, who always thought of other people's pleasure, and did not wish her aunt to fancy herself ignored.

"Certainly. I shall be charmed, if you think it worth your while," said Gerald.

"Then I shall certainly come. My ponies want exercise, and to-morrow is one of the rector's parochial days, so he won't miss me for an hour or two. What time do you contemplate arriving at the Abbey?"

"Oh, I suppose between one and two, the orthodox luncheon-hour," answered Gerald.

Daphne was up and dressed before five o'clock next morning. She had set her little American alarm-clock for five; but that had been a needless precaution, since she had not slept above a quarter of an hour at a time all through the short summer night. She had seen the last glimmer of the fading moon, the first faint glow of sunlight flickering on her wall. She stole softly downstairs, unlocked doors and drew bolts with the silent dexterity of a professional housebreaker, feeling almost as guilty as if she had been one; and in the cool quiet morning, while all the world beside herself seemed asleep, she ran lightly across the dewy lawn, down to the iron bridge by which she had stood with Madoline and Gerald last night. Then she crossed the meadow,

wading ankle-deep in wet grass, and scaring the placid kine, and thus to the boat-house.

She went in and got into her boat, which was drawn up under cover, and carefully protected by linen clothing. She whisked the covering off, and seated herself on the floor of the boat in front of the place of honour, above which appeared the name of the craft in gilded letters on the polished pine—"Nero."

She took out her pen-knife and began carefully, laboriously, to scrape away the gilt lettering. The thing had been so conscientiously done, the letters were so sunk and branded into the wood, that the task seemed endless; she was still digging and scraping at the first letter when Arden church clock struck six, every stroke floating clear and sweet across the river.

"What—an—utter—idiot I was," she said to herself, in an exasperated tone, emphasising each word with a savage dig of her knife into the gilded wood. "And how shall I ever get all these letters out before breakfast time?"

"Why attempt it?" asked a low pleasant voice close at hand, and Daphne, becoming suddenly aware of the odour of tobacco mixed with the perfumes of a summer meadow, looked up and saw Gerald Goring lounging against the door-post.

"Why erase the name?" he asked. "It is a very good name—classical, historical, and not altogether inappropriate. Nero was a boat-builder himself, you know."

"Was he?" said Daphne, sitting limply in the bottom of her boat, completely unnerved.

"Yes; the vessel he built was a failure, or at any rate the result of his experiment was unsatisfactory, but the intention was original and deserves praise. I am sorry you have spoilt the first letter of his name."

"Don't distress yourself," exclaimed Daphne, jumping up and stepping briskly out of her boat. "I am going to change the name of my boat, and I thought I could do it this morning as a surprise for Lina; but it was a more difficult business than I supposed. And now I must run home as fast as I can, and make myself tidy for breakfast. My father is the essence of punctuality."

"But as half-past eight is his breakfast hour you need not be in a desperate hurry. It has only just struck six. Will you come for a stroll?"

"No, thank you. I have ever so much to do before breakfast."

"Czerny's studies of velocity?"

"No."

"French grammar?"

"No."

"Be sure you are ready to start directly after breakfast."

Daphne scampered off through the wet grass, leaving Mr. Goring standing by the boat-house door, looking down with an amused smile at the mutilated name.

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

A GUN-RACK.

IN the glazed porch of my dwelling, nearly hid at summer time by flowers and climbing plants, this trophy hangs. In younger days, when I kept and eke employed a little arsenal of fire-arms, they rested on a very curious frame. My guns and rifles now are carried by more active hands, saving an old Snider carbine, rusted and jammed in the breech, but loaded I know. It is the merest detail, quite unimportant for our legend; but I will rise from my desk and see what dusty rubbish now fills the place of those nobler instruments. Imprimis, an almond-stick cut in the garden of the Arx at Candahar. A thorn-stick from the Khoord Khyber; how that brawny old Pathan gashed his legs in winning it, and how coolly he staunched the rushing blood with earth! A hunting-crop with metal head, strangely dented and misshapen, I do not remember how. Two fly-rods. The skull and beak of a rhinoceros hornbill. An Egyptian pipe-stem of cherry-wood. A riding-whip, mended with a silver plate and a bit of wire by the blacksmith of San José de Costa Rica. A walking-stick of iron-wood, heavy as a metal bar, which once formed half of a Bornean spear-shaft; I lost the other half, an older favourite, at Sistof on the Danube, in the late war. But this has travelled with me, by steamer five thousand miles, on horseback one thousand five hundred.

There are very curious and pretty horns which compose my gun-rack. Once on a time, in guilelessness of heart, I committed myself to certain definitions in zoology, a science I have studied rather with my eyes than with my brain. They were wrong, no doubt, for all the flaccid pack of bone-collectors set upon and mouthed me in their toothless jaws. I left them at it, starting for another course of practical experience. But the incident warns me to be careful in descriptions of technical sort. We used to

think in Borneo that the kijong is an antelope, but probably enough we were mistaken. Whatever its class, it is a pretty little beast, chestnut coloured, standing about two feet high, and very good to eat. One half the surface of its horns is clothed with skin and hair; a spreading rim marks the point whence springs the true antler. Over the forehead, a little branch curls inward. The tips bend to meet each other, with a slight inclination backwards. Five pairs on either side form the rack; at top and bottom of the frame are horns very similar at first glance, but seen to be radically different on examination. No curling rim sets off the root of the antler, which rises straight, diverging outward. There is no sign of a branch, and the width of the forehead is greater. For sixteen years, more or less, I have been intending to submit these two pairs of horns to scientific scrutiny; for I have reason to believe they represent a species unknown.

To the best of my recollection, the kijongs were all shot or speared in the nets. It is wondrous luck to catch these little creatures in the open. Hardly can the European eye perceive the small deer of Borneo, when it browses at sunset amongst the low close brushwood of the slopes. Its antler-tips alone are visible above the stalks and branches, betraying it to the keen-sighted Dyak by their motion. If the least wind be stirring, your best glass will scarcely serve you. The guide trembles with impatience as he directs your gaze; for the sun is going down, mists are rising in the valley where you crouch, blue shadows swiftly mount to quench the lurid glow still burning up above. His eyes sparkle as he whispers, in a breath scarce audible at three feet distance. His ornaments softly tinkle with the quiver of his body, like that of a greyhound in the leash. When after a patient search your dull eye sees as it were a twig that moves amongst that sheeny, glossy tangle, when the Dyak marks the steadying of your glance, he rises suddenly, his head and neck above the foliage. That is the moment. If your sight is strained upon the proper place, you will see for one short second a small graceful head upraised, large ears pricked forward, dark eyes fixed upon you. Upon your conduct at this crisis will depend your supper.

But the kijong is too small to show the slightest sign above the brushwood, and too wary to be often caught at salt pans or

drinking places. In fact, I do not remember to have heard any sportsman boast of having shot one fairly—in the open, that is. He differs from the exquisite p'landok, the mouse-deer, in being wholly a jungle animal. P'landok are fond of grass, and with the extremest caution the lovely little creatures may be stalked. I have somewhere the skull of one shot just outside my garden fence at Sibi; the smallest of toy-terriers has a bigger head.

One day, whilst I was dressing skins of birds or snakes or what not, an old Kennowit chief sat watching me. "What a fool the lord is!" he observed to my interpreter.

I have come to think that this opinion of my character mildly expressed the views of long-suffering Ali, but he was hugely indignant. "This Kennowit man say you fool, sir," he exclaimed. "What he mean, the ignorant heathen?"

"Ask him!" I replied; and it was done with emphasis. The worthy savage explained that no one right in his head would abandon the luxuries of Belati, to pick up feathers and rubbish on the other side the world. "For," said he, with the frankness of his uncouth people, "he does not collect things worth having. There are charms amongst us Kennowits, as everybody knows, really useful; but when my brother offered him for sale the wondrous stone discovered in a snake's belly, he would not have it. Look at those horns he is taking to Belati: common kijong's, and rusa's, pig's tusks, and snake's teeth. I possess the horn of a p'landok! Its fellow was brass, and I melted it to make this siri-box. That is a real charm. What will he give?"

"Show it me!" I said, not without interest, when the chief's words had been duly translated. The p'landok is alleged to have no horns, and I never saw an example to the contrary; but a belief prevails, wherever this animal is found, that very rare individuals have some kind of excrescence on the forehead. When the Kennowit produced his specimen, however, it was evidently no more than a kijong horn, malformed and stunted. There were other things in the tambok which contained it, a basket of split rattans, prettily dyed and plaited. Turning it over, I examined the chief's stock of fetishes. They were the silliest rubbish possible, tusks and bones and teeth, bits of wood curiously twisted, knots of hair and pebbles. "Why," I said to Ali, "this Kennowit

man himself lays store by kijong horns!" holding up the proof. My interpreter laughed roughly, triumphing over the Kafir, and all the savages assembled made merry at their lord's expense. But he cried: "That a kijong! It is the charm on which our village depends for its prosperity. No kijong ever had horrors like those! They came off the head of an antu." Then he pointed out the differences which I have mentioned, apparent enough when brought to notice. His people listened with awe.

"Tell him I will give a quarter-dollar for the thing!" I said to Ali, taking my gun for the evening's stroll. The Kennowit scorned to answer, and I went my way. Later at night, when we had reassembled round the fires, I heard the following story. It needs all the evidence forthcoming to persuade me sometimes that I am the same living man who blithely underwent the experiences of my youth. Scenes vastly more impressive than any I recall from Borneo have passed before my eyes since then. No doubt of their reality disturbs me, but I could almost fancy, now and again, that my long sojourn in the far East was a dream.

We sat in the covered verandah of the house, perched forty feet above the ground. Fires blazed from space to space down the shadowy vista, for each household has its own. Men squatted on the mats around them, impatient for the suppers which their busy women were preparing inside their chambers. They were naked, saving the breech-clout, the head-handkerchief, the armlets of white shell, and the long coils of brazen wire on their wrists; but the close and minute tattooing on their bodies gave the appearance of a dark blue vest. This habit distinguishes the Kayans and Kennowits from the Dyaks, a race superior in all respects. They gossiped merrily of the day's events, and jested with the girls who moved among them, not too full of household cares for a shrewd exchange of banter. Their eyes, small, prominent, and inky-black, shone in the firelight, and their bracelets glittered. Weapons hung on the posts, ready to each man's hand: spears, swords, shields, blow-pipes. The chief's hearth was largest, and here the elders gravely sat to gather wisdom of the stranger and to impart it. The lobes of their aged ears were so distended that they fell upon the shoulder as a loop of twine falls; one could thrust one's closed hand through the least of them. Overhead were suspended

the trophies of their own and their forefathers' prowess, in the form of twenty or thirty skulls, smoke-dried, grinning, distorted from all human shape. Here were my quarters. The fire glowed all night, for the comfort of the old men, and of those relieved by public admiration from toiling in the fields, who never seemed to sleep. I left them droning their old tales and chewing betel; I woke at any hour, and heard the same slow clack of tongues, the same splash of copious expectoration, the same rustling of the siri-box pushed from hand to hand along the mats. Outside, beyond the eaves, the deep blue night slept tranquilly, the cigales whirled in the black trees, the fronds of the penang drooped like plumes against the lucent sky. And I gave myself to sleep again with awful content and happiness.

Thus the Kennowit told the legend of his charm: "One day," he said, "after the rice-harvest, I went to seek gutta-percha in the woods. It is long ago; I was a young man, poor and unconsidered. We Kennowits lived much further up the stream then, for the English rajah had not yet established peace, and, betwixt the Kayans and the Dyaks, we led the life of hunted deer. Even in holiday time our warriors did not dare go out, as the custom is, to seek jungle produce. They were brave, they feared no enemy, they had many heads in the pangah. But the women and children were not safe from hour to hour. As for me, I was a single man, in want of a wife; so I took provisions and set out. Gutta-trees were common there as bamboos. But on this occasion—it was the strangest thing!—I could not find a tree. When I climbed a tapong, to overlook the forest, there they stood in dozens; but all vanished at my approach. Some necromancer had bewitched me. I could pick up gutta-leaves quite fresh, torn off by the monkeys or parrots; but there was no tree overhead. And yet all this while my angel (omen-bird) flew constantly before me on the right hand, uttering three cries. The grasshoppers were equally propitious. They never sang together, but one at a time, always on the right. I dreamt also of a wife and children, which, as you know, is a sign of extraordinary luck; but still the gutta-trees disappeared before me. So it went on for a week. With such encouragement no one but a fool would have returned, but when I found myself above the rapids, two days' march in the Kayan country, I was frightened.

"It was borne in upon me that an antu dogged my track. I made the figure of an alligator in mud, and stuck it full of bamboos spikes. My bird called 'Tri-k, tri-k' all the while I was shaping the image, and I knew that it was pleased. At evening time I got into a tree and waited. Something passed softly underneath, stood an instant, breathing in pain, then dashed through the bushwood. Next day I cut half-a-dozen stout bamboos, and sharpened them so keen that they would pierce a plank of iron-wood. With these I made traps, and set them round about the place. I dared not watch again, but lay far off in the woods, trembling. About midnight the forest suddenly echoed with bellowings and screams. Lightning played round me. The trees clashed their branches. In that blue glare I saw fearful shapes which rushed yelling by me. The marrow withered in my bones, and I turned face downwards to the earth. A hurricane swept through the forest, and lifted me, but I clung fast to roots and bushes. Then the rain suddenly swelled, and came upon me in a flood; but I struggled against it, and kept my ground. At length, with a last long shriek, the tumult stilled. The antu was dead!"

The effect of this story on a superstitious and imaginative audience was striking. Men, women, and children had drawn close to hear. Their wild eyes burned with excitement, and they pressed one on another till the perspiration gleamed on their naked shoulders. At this moment, in the bush outside, a shrill cry rang out, that of a wild cat springing on its victim. The women screamed, the men struggled towards their arms, and all the serried mass rolled on the floor. I laughed heartily, so did my Malays, so did the Kennowits when they recovered from the scare. But the girls ran away, and were seen no more that night.

"You looked for the antu in the morning?" I asked of the chieftain. "What did you find?"

"An awful thing! Its head was like a panther's, with fangs of steel; its body like that of a horse, and its tail a snake; that was still alive, and hissed at me. When I struck at it with my parang it broke away from the body and glided off."

"And on the creature's head were those horns?"

"Yes. I brought them home, and everything has prospered with me since. Whilst I cut off the antu's head my omen-bird

called behind me for the first time. Of course I returned, and everywhere on that same trail, which had not a gutta-tree when I advanced, they grew in clumps. More than that, I found gold, and groves of sago, and I know not what. It employed me weeks to bring my produce to the river, but in all that time no Kayan ever appeared. I became the richest man in our village, and when we moved, after the English rajah's coming, the people chose me for their tiah."

What is one to say of this story? That the old man believed it I could scarcely doubt. Many repetitions had increased its marvel, and had furnished the antu with some attributes which Cuvier would have ridiculed, but a foundation of truth seemed to be discernible. I asked if there were wild cattle in that country, and panthers; the chief said that both were common, of a large breed. Thus the bellowing and screams might be accounted for, and a sudden storm would easily produce the other effects upon a man distracted by superstitious fears. The snake's tail, which hissed and escaped, needs no explaining; it gives, indeed, a confirmation to my belief that the tale was substantially true, for all the exaggerations and absurdities which time and fancy had attached to it.

"What will you take for the horns?" I said.

"Nothing on earth would buy them! They hold the prosperity of my village." But I obtained the curiosities at last for a handful of quinine, two bottles of schnaps, and three empty soda-water bottles—these last a special treasure in the far East.

The pair of similar horns which decorate the bottom of my gun-rack, came to my hands with a story much less romantic. I accompanied the present Rajah Brooke, then Tuan Mudah, on a trip through the outlying districts of this same province. One evening we were invited to a feast, and left the vessel en grande tenue, after an early dinner. Our boat was overladen, I recollect, and it gained the shore but just in time, filling as the last of us sprang out. A mighty uncomfortable adventure it would have been for me, had we sunk in the rapid current of the Batang Lupar. Malays are water-dogs, and to them the ducking would have been a joke. Nor had the officers occasion for alarm, since their boatmen and servants would have carried them ashore without exertion on their part. But a stranger had no claim to such service, and with an unpleasant smile I picture myself drifting

down the misty river, hundreds of yards in width, escorted by sharks and alligators on a stream running like a mill-sludge. However, that chance of death was escaped, as had been so many before, and so very many since. We leapt ashore, and climbed a lofty pole which sloped upwards to the verandah of our hosts. It had notches on either side, foothold enough for a race almost as prehensile with their toes as monkeys. The most of us Europeans were accustomed to go barefoot. May it be whispered that his highness himself kicked off his shoes, and swarmed the pole as easily as a bear? He will not be offended at the revelation, for if the wise man does at Rome as the Romans do, much more in Borneo should we take lessons from the Dyaks.

Upon the outside verandah we were met by a deputation of high chiefs, wearing their ornaments of gold, and clad in silk. The "house"—Dyak or Kennowit or Kayan—is, in fact, the village, no matter how many souls are reckoned therein. It is divided longitudinally into three parts: the range of sleeping chambers, one to each family; the inner verandah, sheltered by the roof, on which these chambers open; and the outer verandah, beyond the eave. This last is devoted to such operations as are objectionable indoors—washing children, cleaning rice, and so on. There is but one floor, of course, which is raised ten to fifty feet above the ground on massive posts. As the population grows, the house is "produced," to use a mathematical term; buildings of a thousand feet in length are not at all uncommon. Festivities take place in the covered verandah, where nothing but the beams, and fire-places easily removed, obstruct any demonstration of uproarious spirit. A great occasion it is when the rajah is invited. The chiefs greeted us warmly but respectfully, and led us to a place of honour. But one chair had been sent ashore, which his highness occupied; the others squatted cross-legged on the mats, nursing our swords, those who had them. The entertainment was of the usual class, but grander. Warriors danced before us with singular agility, and a display of pantomime quite astonishing. I do not remember, at this moment, any exception to the rule that the power of mimicry is possessed in its highest degree by the races of mankind lowest in civilisation. No actor in my experience—which is wide—can equal the half-human Bushmen in this respect. I draw no conclusion from this fact, but it merits notice. The Kennowit

are certainly least advanced of those Bornean races which have formed a community—unless, perhaps, the Kayans are inferior. There are, in the East, wood-dwelling representatives of the Bushmen just mentioned, but little is known of them. Such are Ujits, Pakatans, and others, who, if the theory be correct which I confidently put forward, should be the best pantomimists of all. But the Kennowits are certainly more skilful in this art than their neighbours of a higher grade, the Dyaks, who again excel the Malays—Malay humour, indeed, does not so express itself; if I may trust my memory.

A bear-dance was performed for us, a mias-dance, a head-hunting dance, and others, with shrewd appreciation of character and great variety of incident. Then the warriors engaged in mimic fight, and two famous actors represented a jungle tragedy. After stalking each other a long time, as head-hunters do, they met and fought with sword and shield. Presently one of them fell, and the other clutched him by the hair in triumph with many gesticulations. Upon the very point of severing the upturned neck, he recognised his brother. The women gave effect to this discovery by uttering a horror-stricken hawl; but the victor's expression, gestures, attitudes, were so full of dramatic spirit that I followed the story without need of explanation.

Then, after all the chiefs had danced, and such of the warriors as had a claim to that distinction, the women stood forward. Half-a-dozen hideous old wretches in jacket and blue and tartan petticoat stood one behind the other, and swayed their arms about, with undulations of the hips. They were entitled to respect both for age and rank, but much liquor had been consumed, and the younger men were impatient. They shouted and jeered at those venerable matrons, whilst the girls laughed mockingly. In vain did the chiefs, very drunk, try to quell the uproar. But the dames were not going to be put down by their grandchildren, and they continued the performance, querulously squabbling with one another about figures and "time." The Tuan Mudah himself it was who put a sudden stop to the entertainment. Lit with smoky torches, crammed with naked humanity, the verandah had become insufferable, and we all longed for the cool quarters on board the *Venus*. With a significant smile at me his highness asked: "Are there no young women in your village, Orang Kaya? Or can they not dance?" The

unruly throng shouted with delight, whilst the wretched harridans collapsed. One burst into tears of spite as she pushed the girls aside—pinching them, I'm certain—and escaped. We took the opportunity to go, escorted as far as the edge of the verandah by the most sober of our hosts. Even these could not walk singly, and we should have been smothered under their warm but ill-judged adieus had not the Malays protected us with outstretched rifles. While we smoked a last cheroot on deck the fun ashore grew louder and louder. Several times in the night I woke, disturbed by a wilder burst of song and merriment. The great house seemed to hang in air, ablaze with ruddy light, which streamed beneath the open eave, and rolled in smoky volumes through the apertures of the roof. Dusky figures staggered out, to cool and sleep away their drink in the verandah. The black river was seamed with scarlet threads, reflections of the pandemonium up above. One great shaft of glare crossed the water like a lurid bridge, and faintly outlined the dim trees upon the other bank. The festivities continued day and night, with a loss of several lives by accident or alcoholic apoplexy. When food and drink were all expended, the warriors staggered home, supported by their female-kind, half dead. It is not necessary to compassionate these. They create the mischief, and take pride in their success. I have watched a pretty girl befool a man to drink, with just such ridicule and coaxing as her English sister would employ to gain an end. I have seen her scream with triumphant malice when the poor fellow rolled helpless at her feet, and call her friends to laugh at him. I hoped that she would have to carry that stalwart victim on her shoulders, when the fun was over.

But about the horns. They were tied upon a post just by my seat, with many a tusk and antler, used as clothes-pegs, or hooks to hang weapons upon. When I expressed a wish to have them, a chief cut the lashings and presented me with a miscellaneous armful.

CEMENTED

ARE, wet the shattered edges daintily,
Place them together in the ancient shape,
Match hue and fair design with careful eye,
And let no fragment from your search escape;
So, place the cup where no keen sunlight glance.
Pshaw, does such injured beauty pay your pain?
'Twill hold a mimic waxen bud, perchance,
But never water for a rose again.

Uneasy the angry words; the charge recall;
 Deny or plead away doubt, slight, or sneer;
 Before the outraged shrine for pardon fall,
 Win back the smile with the forgiving tear;
 The happy "safety of affection" lost,
 Trust and its frank free gladness fled together,
 What boots to feign the faith, to count the cost?
 The wounded love will bear the scar for ever.

Ah, keep the precious porcelain in its niche,
 Guard close the fragile darlings of the heart,
 Oh, ye, in life's pure treasures proud and rich;
 The fruit and its first bloom are light to part;
 Dread one rough touch; no time again can give,
 Once gone, or perfect form or fearless faith;
 In prayer and patience mourn it while ye live,
 And hope to win it back in heaven through death.

MY LITTLE TOUR IN WALES.

PART VI.

IF that nice little place on the Riviera where all the consumptive people go, you know, be really as like Barmouth as Lady Tattenham declares it to be, then the nice little place on the Riviera—which after some comparing of notes we conclude to be Mentone—must be a very nice little place indeed. Whether it really has a foreign air or not I can't say. But the air it has is certainly not English, though perhaps, the place not being English, that is not quite so striking a fact as at first sight it may appear to be.

The station is somewhat novel in its arrangements, laying itself out for the reception of casual visitors, in preference to the regular inhabitants of the place, with a frankness I do not remember to have noted in any English watering-place. Cabs or frys there are none. But about half the platform is open to the road, and above the outer edge thereof hangs a neat little row of signboards, each setting forth the fixed station of some special hotel omnibus which is backed up under it, at an artful distance below the platform level, so that its passengers have nothing to do but walk straight in without even the trouble of a step. Those who have already secured for themselves private lodgings may avail themselves, for the transport of their luggage, of the services of the town porter, a quite novel functionary in my experience, who has a little board and a little station to himself at the end of the platform, with a smart little cart and a smart little pony all complete. Sometimes, I observe, the pony is exchanged for a donkey, who is a character in his way and on playfully chaffing terms with every porter and hanger-on about the place.

And the same air of laying itself out for visitors pervades the whole of the little town. More than half the shops have

"for the season only" as plainly marked upon their picturesque fronts as though a placard to that effect hung over their tempting windows. From the station, indeed, to the principal hotel—which for fear, I suppose, of being overrun with custom has endowed itself with the euphonious and easily-to-be-remembered title of the "Cors y Gedol"—there is nothing that a Londoner would call a "shop" at all. But there is a delicious little row of wooden booths, as perfect a Vanity Fair of fruit, and fish, and flowers, and vegetables, and Welsh diamonds, and toys, and knickknacks, and agate boxes, and half a hundred other useful and useless things, as John Bunyan himself could ever have imagined.

A wonderfully gay look these bright little booths give to the place, and its gaiety is not diminished by the wealth of flowers and shrubs which, in spite of the stormy winter weather, evidently manage to flourish somehow all the year through. Such fuchsias and such myrtle I have never seen in the open air except in Devonshire, and there is no feeling of the heavy South Devon air in the sparkling breeze that comes rustling in from the wide blue sea. And up and down the gay little street the little summer colony saunters idly; not in gorgeous watering-place array, but in good homely holland or serviceable serge, while the children come pattering up from the broad sands, just the other side of the bit of green that fronts the hotel, with bare little pink toes and sunburnt calves still glistening with brine.

I wonder whether it is a Welsh custom to do altogether without lights in their theatres, or whether that is a luxury peculiar to Barmouth. I remember Adolphus's uncle Augustus telling us how, when he was attached to the Legation at Copenhagen, the great central chandelier of the Royal theatre used to be wound up into the ceiling at the beginning of every act, so that when the curtain was up there was no light except that upon the stage. But Barmouth goes a step ahead even of this. It is not exactly arranged after the ordinary pattern of theatres in any respect, being simply a huge bare room at the top of a long narrow staircase which forms the sole means of ingress to all the three different classes—two shilling stalls, one shilling pit, and sixpenny "gallery"—into which its accommodation is divided, and which all three, gallery and all, are simply so many long rows of chairs or benches with an imaginary, or let us say a con-

ventional, boundary line between the different sets. After all, there must be a good deal of honesty about the world still. For the entrance is at the stage end—serving, indeed, as I imagine, for stage door as well—and of course everyone who enters finds himself straightway in the two shilling stalls. Why, except for a pure innate love of justice, he should take the trouble to hunt in the dark, and without the smallest chance of his self-abnegation being even realised by the checktaker on the stairs outside, for the humbler bench at the back to which his sixpence has honestly entitled him, it is difficult to say. But they all religiously “sort themselves,” and a solemn hush settles down, broken only by an occasional giggle or a whispered “Ha’ done now” from the dim recesses of the sixpenny seats.

Then the fiddle begins to tune itself, and does so with a vigour and persistency which must, I am afraid, have altogether exhausted the energies of the performer. For when presently the piano breaks out into what may be called a general operatic selection, consisting apparently of as much of the more popular works of Offenbach, Hervé, Arthur Sullivan, and others, as the pianist can at the moment call to mind, the stringed portion of the orchestra after a couple of wild and wholly irrelevant chords retires altogether from the contest, or only strikes in now and then with a stray note or two from the last bar but one. It is rather hard upon the pianist, who has evidently calculated upon his coadjutor to help him over the tender places where the dumb notes of his own instrument come in—or rather do not come in—or his own memory or execution fall a little shorter than usual of the mark. So at least I judge from the “recitativo accompanied” of unmistakably “Saxon” English of which a stray objurgation or two every now and then find its way to us through the unstopped gaps.

Even an *ad libitum* overture must come to an end some time. The pianist’s reminiscences have been exhausted long since, and through the maze of inchoate chords and inconsequent roudades under which, with the loud pedal hard down, he is striving nobly to conceal his frenzied search after at least one more fragment of one more tune, I fancy I begin to hear imminent threatenings of the Old Hundredth. But the stage-manager is no doubt aware that even a pianist will turn if he be kept hammering too late, and the apparition between curtain and

proscenium of a stubby hand and a broad face, from the latter of which proceeds a very audible shout of “That’ll do,” puts an end at least to this part of our punishment, and gets the curtain up triumphantly upon the “glorious comedy” of *The Rising Generation*. Compared with the original performance of the “glorious comedy” in London, the present representation has one great advantage. It may not be more natural, and I am afraid it is certainly not more artistic. But it is incomparably more funny. The ‘aughty English baronet is wonderfully flavoured by the addition of a well-developed brogue, whilst an entire innocence of teeth or aspirates gives a special piquancy to the aristocratic attractions of his refined and well-preserved sister. Except for the facial advantage of a huge natural moustache the worthy buttermilk has not quite such opportunities. But he makes the most of those he has, as, being a manager, he has the right and the opportunity to do. Indeed, it is in the cares and responsibilities of management that his great opportunity lies, and the artful way in which the dialogue of the piece is interlarded with injunctions to “Lower out that cloth,” “Push that wing further on,” “Look out for that curtain,” and, above all, “Stop that row,” is as delightful as it is at times bewildering. Oddly enough the only part that has not been thus improved is the part of the young gentleman, who really is as much like a young gentleman as his author will in any wise suffer him to be. Whether the thing be any the odder for the fact that this young gentleman is a young lady, and that she has undertaken the part at a moment’s notice to fill the place of the suddenly vanished “walking gentleman” of the company, I leave for more experienced critics to determine. Not being a critic, I am happy to say, I simply enjoy this young lady’s capital performance very much, and am not half so greatly relieved as I expected to be when by-and-by the curtain wobbles down for the last time, and a vigorous “Tum tum tum tu-rum-tum-tum,” in which both piano and fiddle unite, announces that the evening’s entertainment has come to an end.

There is one person in the theatre, however, who is even less gratified by the loyal strains than I am. And that is the manager. We have hardly got to “our gra-a-cious Que—” when the side of the curtain is pulled vehemently back, and a spectral fist makes its appearance, shaking itself with mute but effective eloquence in the direction of the

for once too unanimous orchestra. The loyal strains cease as suddenly as though a republic had been proclaimed. But the exodus it has inspired continues, and the theatre is already more than half emptied by the time the manager himself rushes bodily on, to announce that, in their laudable anxiety to reach the point at which they really could co-operate, piano and violin have been premature in their loyalty. The performances are not over; will only terminate as announced with a song from Miss Kate So-and-so, who therewith, without waiting for any niceties of toilette, reappears before the dozen or two of easy-going people who have not yet made good their retreat, and in a fine soprano voice, and the garb of the young gentleman hero of the comedy, sings for their special and exclusive benefit the good old ditty of the Jolly Young Waterman. The effect is, perhaps, as Edward Emilius says, just a trifle mixed, and would certainly have been better could the piano—the violin again discreetly silent—have succeeded in keeping, say, within a bar or so of the singer. But we are not disposed to be hypercritical, and the end of the performance has really come at last, and the united efforts of piano and violin soon clear the theatre of its last lingering occupants.

Personally speaking, I could find it in my heart to linger in this quiet little out-of-the-way watering-place, with its pleasant contrast to the holiday cockneyhood of our southern sea-suburbs, for the rest of our trip. The long range of Penmaen Pool alone, with its picturesque northern shore studded with snug little country villas like another Como, and its fine northern outlook over Cader Idris and his companions, would furnish outings in endless variety for a week at least. Then within easy reach to the north lie Pwlheli, and Maentwrog, and Ffestiniog, with its funny little toy railway, of which Edward Emilius in his professional enthusiasm gives an account which makes me almost long to buy it bodily, and take it home for Woffles to play with, and Tan-y-Bwlch, and Beddgelert, and the great Snowdon himself.

For the present, however, we are bound for Aberystwith, whither the Tattenhams, indeed, have proceeded direct, and where, as this evening's post duly informs us, they have already succeeded in finding us capital lodgings at a very reasonable rent. So Snowdon must be left till we are fairly on our way home, and if we can't manage it then we must come again when we can.

So early next morning we set out, and let me strongly recommend any one who is about to make the same journey to set out early in the morning too. In the first place it is delightfully cool. But that is a minor matter, for while our London letters all groan of sweltering sun and sultry stifling atmosphere, we out here in the fresh mountain breeze have been gently browning like deftly manipulated toast without once feeling even unpleasantly warm. As the sea-fog comes drifting in to meet us on our way stationwards at half-past seven o'clock this August morning, we are quite content to step sturdily out to warm ourselves.

But if the sea-fog were ever so much cooler and ever so much thicker, I at least forgive it for its work's sake. Barmouth itself it wraps in an impenetrable veil, and as we rattle out upon the long spidery pier that spans the mouth of Penmaen Pool, we seem to be up in cloudland altogether. Just for a moment it lifts as we round the point by Llangelynin, and the quaint little place gives us a parting smile as a sort of "au revoir." Then it shuts in behind us more closely than ever, and a rift opens on our left hand giving a brief glimpse of long rolling hills over which the fleecy mist sweeps in great soft white masses, bringing out every little swell and fall, as one by one they open and sink again from view with a clearness and picturesque effect not to be approached under full-sun glare.

Then the whole mist thins, and the yellow sunshine fills it with a golden glow, and the glimpses of fairyland through the more and more frequent rifts are all brilliant with the glory of the morning. And by-and-by a glittering sun-path begins to glimmer on us from the sea. Then brightens rapidly, as the great grey veil lifts with one final sweep, and rolls away up the long mountain slopes, its rearguard all white and glistening like the christening robes of the young day; then melts and breaks, and hangs awhile in single fleecy masses on here and there a loftier mountain-top; then finally melts and vanishes, and the whole gay landscape is basking once more under an Italian sky, but brightened and freshened by the rustling breeze that comes leaping, not from sultry African deserts or arid Russian steppes, but clear away from the broad Atlantic.

Then we turn inland again, and, rumbling heavily through the narrow rocky cuttings of quaint old Aberdovey, follow for half-a-dozen miles or so the northern coast of another picturesque estuary almost

the ditto of Penmaen Pool, and join company at Glandovey Junction with the other little train which for the last half-hour has been racing us neck and neck along the opposite shore. Then after some ten or a dozen minutes of what, to the un instructed eye, appears to be something like inextricable confusion, find ourselves at last all deftly sorted into the Aberystwith train, and the Barmouth train, and the London express, and the direct Manchester, and the branch train to Dinas Mawddwy, and Heaven and the indefatigable station-master alone know how many more, and are once more buzzing merrily along upon our road.

And now, except for passing through the very smallest railway-station—Ynys Las I think it is—with the smallest station-master and the smallest porter in the smallest suit of corduroys I ever saw, and with a passenger contingent to match in the shape of one very small boy with a microscopic parcel under his arm, I do not know that there is anything of very special note till we reach the long platform of Aberystwith, with its curious vista of ancient Gothic arches in very modern railway iron, and the same sensible foreign arrangement of hotel omnibuses and town porter's cart as at Barmouth. Here, indeed, we have an additional refinement in this direction in the shape of "Mr. Atkins's fly." Who Mr. Atkins is, and why he should have a fly all to himself, or, granting that necessity, what public end is gained by the public announcement of the fact, I am not in a position to say. At the present moment Mr. Atkins is, no doubt, taking a drive, for his fly is not in attendance, and the elegant little signboard merely marks for the edification of the wondering tourist the place where it once has been.

A pleasant little place is Aberystwith, slightly suggestive on a small scale of Weymouth, but with a brisk bright look and a brisk bright atmosphere, neither of which are very specially connected in my personal memory with that pet watering-place of good old George the Third. If I remember rightly, too, there is a somewhat painful respectability about Weymouth—a sort of mute protest no doubt against any association of ideas between it and its very much other than respectable neighbour, Portland—from which Aberystwith is happily free. Not that we are anything but respectable at Aberystwith. But we do not feel called upon to express our respectability in starch and buckram. We are simple-minded folk on the whole, we Aberystwithians,

and if in our ordinary state of existence in any way complex, assume a simplicity for our seaside holiday, and on the whole assume it with considerable success. When we bathe—and the sheltered bay and smooth flat sand make the very ideal of a splashing place—our object is not the display of the last fashion in bathing toilettes, or the most artful thing out in real back hair, but just a dip in the brisk Atlantic brine. When we want an appetite, as some of us no doubt sometimes do, though I cannot say that was one of the wants which ever fell to my experience, we don't maunder up and down a dusty parade, or 'addle our brains by grinding round and round a melancholy circle of creaking flys and hobbling horses, but step gallantly out up the steep slopes of Constitutional Hill, or away to the back of the town, and up the still loftier sides of Pendinas. Perhaps if we have come straight from London, which however is not a very common case, for there are very few traces of Metropolis-super-Mare about the "Queen of Welsh watering-places," we find either of these a trifle beyond our unaccustomed powers, and then we content ourselves with the castle grounds, a pleasant little turf hillock at the northern end of the parade, just beyond the gorgeous new University College of Wales, crowned with the somewhat fragmentary remains of the once famous and formidable Llanfadarn Gaerog, and commanding a pleasant little panorama, on the one side of the bay with its bright little crescent sweep of houses terminating in the abrupt mass of Constitutional Hill, on the other of the queer little old harbour, with may be a rugged old collier brig or a dapper fleet of tan-sailed fishing-boats.

I should like to have seen one of the expeditions set out, which, according to local tradition, used to issue forth from this venerable little port pretty frequently in the olden time. Not a very extensive expedition either. A solemn procession of one, that is all; or at least as solemn as any procession of one can be when that solitary processionist proceeds to sea in a clothes-basket, and without sail or oar to help him home again. That, says local tradition, was the way in which in the good old days when Norma and Adalgisa used to go about the forest cutting mistletoe with golden sickles, and singing the loveliest of ancient British duets by the Bellini of the period, aspirants to the Druidic priesthood were put finally through their facings before passing from their novitiate. If they landed safely

anywhere between Bardsey Island and St. David's Head, it was considered that they were at all events not born to be drowned, and that, so far at least, they were qualified for moonlight excursions in the forest, backing up the local Norma when ever she required the assistance of a chorus, and generally performing the functions of a full-blown Druid. If on the other hand they were full blown in the more strictly practical sense of being blown out to sea, it was philosophically concluded that "they were wanted elsewhere"—probably in Ireland.

Alas! We have no Druids nowadays, except once a year or so at the Crystal Palace. If we went about the woods at night singing Italian choruses in ball-wreaths and white dressing-gowns we should probably be taken up by the rural police, and should certainly catch colds in our heads. And as for coracles, Vathek himself, so far as I can find, might exhaust himself, his temper, and his fortune, before he got any more of them, unless he had them built on purpose.

But after all we don't want coracles to enjoy ourselves with in Aberystwith. If we are studiously disposed we cannot do better than enter ourselves at the magnificent college which now occupies a gorgeous building—or more correctly speaking, as much as has been habitably completed of a gorgeous building—in the hyper-æsthetic style of the period, originally intended for one of a little series of quiet unpretentious hotels not costing more than a hundred thousand or so apiece, and providing for the wants of passengers at the various stations of the Cambrian Railway. Fortunately for the scholastic reputation of Aberystwith the ingenious but perhaps somewhat sanguine speculator found himself, before expending more than the first eighty thousand pounds on the first half of the first hotel of the series, occupying, as Edward Emilius puts it, an unfurnished flat in Queer Street. So the handsome fragment of nineteenth-century Gothic which cost eighty thousand pounds to put up, was knocked down—metaphorically, of course—for the more modest sum of ten thousand pounds. And the inhabitants of the principality generally laid their heads together, and opened their purses, and founded therein the University College of Wales. And the commercial travellers of North Wales did the like and founded a scholarship. And the slate-quarriers of Ffestiniog followed suit, and founded another—for proficiency in cyphering, no doubt. And seven gentle-

men—mystic and significant number—seven gentlemen of the highest academical honours undertook the teaching of thirty-one different subjects, from Sanscrit, Syriac, Ethiopian, and Welsh, to agriculture, music, and political economy. And already a hundred students assemble daily for the attack of this tolerably comprehensive coracleum. And if anybody likes to go and see them do it he has only to summon up courage to sound a summons at the porticoed door of the palatial edifice—there is a bell for the purpose, so he need not invest in a special horn—the payment of sixpence will carry him over the entire building, and the sixpence he pays will go to found yet another scholarship for the special competition of enthusiastic visitors like himself.

I suggest to George that here is a glorious opportunity for turning his holiday to real practical account. I regret to say, George repels the suggestion with contumely. Mr. Edward Emilius on the other hand sends in his name for the visitors' competition forthwith on the sole condition that it should be restricted to the two subjects of Ethiopian and music, and that he should be allowed to combine his study of the two. The answer of the college authorities has not yet been received.

Meanwhile we enjoy ourselves in a less serious but on the whole I think not less satisfactory manner. There is the pleasant little round over the northern hill, home through Clarast, the Valley of Early Harvests; and there is the exhilarating scramble to Sarn Cynfelin, sea-battered no-thoroughfare to Caer Gwyddno and the other drowned cities of the vanished Lowland Hundred. And there are the Alltwn Cliffs, and the grim sea-caves where the big waves boom and roar in style quite exhilarating to those who are safe out of their reach. And there are the Pwllcarndog Falls, little visited of uninstructed tourists, but quite worth a visit if you have only a pleasant party wherewith to visit them—as indeed what visitable spot is not? And there is Tulierin's grave, for lovers of archæology; and the Tallybout, with its manufactories of "everlasting" Welsh tweeds and linseys, for the lover of the practical; and Plynlymon for the lovers of mountain air; and the great valley of Mynydd Hyddgen for the lover of history; and the Devil's Bridge for the lover of romance; and Ponrhydfendigaed, and Llanfihangel, and Llangrwydden, and Pencareggoppa, and

Yspyttylyntwym, for the lover of spelling-bees; and the whole pleasant round of mountain and coast and sea for lovers of things in general, as all wise people out for a holiday should always be.

Our little party at all events enjoys itself so well that even the thoughts of romantic Bedd-gellert and gigantic Snowdon begin to lose something of their more urgent attraction. Which is perhaps as well. For one morning Adolphus makes his appearance on our return, wet to the knees from a scrambling excursion along the rocky beach, with a long face and a yellow envelope in his hand, and we know that in his absence the whole remaining strength of the Department has not been able to restrain the affairs of the country from rushing forward at most unofficial speed, and that unless we would wish to find that something has actually been done, our holiday is at an end.

I suppose we must really be in a severe state of dumps, for even Edward Emilius is infected by it. As for getting so much as a laugh out of him all the way of that last desperate scramble to the caves, I might as well attempt that experiment on one of the great blue mussels that never open their lips till after they are dead. I positively get silent myself after a time, and there we sit like a couple of stranded oysters waiting for the tide. When I at length do jump up with the view of beating a by no means premature retreat, he actually jumps up too, catches hold of my hand, and stops me.

"I say, Maggie! May I say Maggie?" he begins.

"It seems to me," I reply demurely, "that you have said it."

Whereupon he proceeds to say more—a good deal more. And insists upon my hearing it too, in spite of the tide. Which really comes in at such a pace that, if I were to stay to argue the point, my little tour in Wales would come to a premature and moist conclusion. So there is no help for it. Edward Emilius has his way. And in reward he has the impertinence to tell me perhaps I may some day see Snowdon after all, only it won't be "my" little tour in Wales then, you know, but "ours."

OUR NATIONAL MUSIC, BRITISH AND IRISH.

NATIONAL music is a puzzle, and has been so for any number of years. What is a nation? Is it a population identical or nearly so in race or in creed, or in both?

Is it a people much isolated by natural peculiarities, cutting it off from most others? Is it the home of a community which has for centuries lived under the same form of government, and become, as it were, stereotyped in tastes, manners, and tendencies? We find all these meanings in current use, and may perhaps accept an agglomeration or amalgamation of them. Then spring up the further questions: What is it that constitutes the music of each nation, as distinguished from that of others? Is it the music only, or the music married to words? When we find that the music of one nation presents peculiarities that can be felt, whether or not we can describe them, how do we know that no other nation shares it with them? Ordinary readers can scarcely imagine the amount of controversy that has arisen on these matters; controversy in which the combatants are but little disposed to yield one to another, either in opinion or in demonstrative insistance. The late Mr. Henry F. Chorley, a musical critic of much distinction, had a great liking for this subject; he lectured on it, and wrote articles and papers on it. Since his decease, a revised edition of the essays and lectures has been lately prepared by Mr. Henry G. Hewlett.

Mr. Chorley takes a wide sweep (we speak of him in the present tense for convenience). He ranges from east to west, from north to south, touching, as he goes, on the music of all nations worth taking into account. He treats pointedly of the difficulty of applying any precise test to the veritability of national music; observation, guess, and coincidence must often be allowed to over-rule tradition. We have to take into account the uncertainty of memory. "Melodies carried over sea and land, handed down by persons having high or low or no voices, from spinning-wheel to spinning-wheel, from 'knitters in the sun to knitters in the sun,' in the days preceding the recording of the notes in manuscript." Much uncertainty also results concerning the forms of early musical instruments, often derived from sculpture and monumental drawings which require to be studied with caution.

Our own country, Great Britain and Ireland, will be quite as much as can be grappled with in this article.

Mr. Chorley, after naming many printed collections of national music, all of them valuable and interesting, observes that we here enter upon anything but a region of brotherly love as regards music; a region

of hot controversy over our rich treasures of national melody. In countries lying so closely near one to another as ours it would not be easy to separate what may have been brought by pedlars, by strollers mixing among the retainers of nobles and barons, from what has grown out of the soil, save on some principle of resemblance from observation and comparison.

Beginning with Wales, for reasons deemed by him sufficient, our author informs us that he finds in the tunes of that country remarkable grandeur and pathos, and, combined with these, a regularity of structure and of intervals which set them apart from every other group of national melodies with which he is acquainted. Few melodies of other countries have been less tinged by strange or foreign influences. The solitary position which the Welsh have preferred, their high pride of ancestry, their resolution to protract the existence of a separate language, their defensive habits in points of litigation, the scenery of a region which has features and attractions of its own—all these things he believes to have conspired to retain in the music of the principality a certain primitive character. Little doubt, it seems, is entertained among the musical critics of the other three portions of the United Kingdom about the genuine character of Welsh melodies.

An important remark is made by him concerning the great influence of the harp, the characteristic instrument of Wales, on the symmetry of Welsh tunes. With its three rows of strings—the third appearing to be anticipatory of the pedals of the modern harp—there is little temptation for those caprices of interval which have been generated by stringed instruments of less elaboration in arrangement. "The charm of this harp is not merely such as belongs to the intimate correspondence between master and servant, which it seems to encourage, but in its own peculiar tones. The harp, though somewhat neglected of late, continues to be one of the primitive sources of melody"—not merely because of its peculiar tones, but because of its simplicity of scale. Besides the harp-tunes of Wales, conveniently so-called, there are singers' tunes of great vocal purity and clearness. The Welsh will dance for twelve hours at a time, but they appear to have few or no national dance-tunes of their own, such as the Scotch reel, the Irish jig, or the English horpipe. Handel is believed to have worked with

Welsh materials in composing some of the music of his *Deborah* and also of his *Acis and Galatea*; but, speaking in a general way, only a few Welsh melodies become nationalised in other countries.

Passing from West Britain to North Britain, from Wales to Scotland, we get into a hot-bed of disputation. Scotchmen and Irishmen have long been fighting for the nationality of certain airs; while of late English musical critics have been rushing in to get as much credit for England out of Scotland and Ireland as they could have any chance of obtaining.

It is declared by Mr. Chorley (somewhat to our surprise) that "on the Continent Scottish music is the term applied to all the national airs of this country." So far has this gone that even in a collection arranged by Beethoven the Welsh tune *Of a Noble Race* was Shenkin, the English *Sally in our Alley*, and the Irish *Last Rose of Summer*, are all included among Scotch music. This, if it be really the case, may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that Scotland had a civilised court of her own down to a late period; and that thus "the products of the north country were naturally more largely interchanged with those of other European countries than could be the products of exclusive Wales or of careless, harassed Ireland." Boieldieu has incorporated a few Scotch melodies in his opera, *La Dame Blanche*—not unreasonably, seeing that the plot of the opera is mostly based on Sir Walter Scott's *Monastery*. Similarly, Auld Lang Syne is worked in among the tunes in Niedermayer's *Marie Stuart*. As a third example, Scottish melodies are worked into Mendelssohn's beautiful *Scotch Symphony*.

The bagpipe of Scotland claims to be superior to that of any other country, and not without some justification. It is humorously remarked that any one of the stalwart pipers whose performances are so attractive in our Scottish regiments could blow down, by the force and percussion of his drone, any rival from the sister island, from Calabria, from the Basque Provinces, or from the centre of France.

There is a peculiarity in much Scottish music, technically known as the "snap," produced by a rapid staccato succession of two notes, say a semiquaver followed by a dotted quaver. Many of the tunes, such as *Alister McAlister*, owe much of their piquancy to this snap. Triple time is not so frequently observed in Scotch music as in that of the sister

island; the reel and the strathspey, different as they are in character, are alike in this. Nevertheless, the favourite tunes Tweedside, and Wooded and Married and A', are cited as examples of melodies in the three-bar rhythm very peculiar in effect.

Turning next to Ireland, we receive a reminder that any critic in search of nationality in the music must keep a calm ear and a keen eye; so much will he be beset by the claims to very great antiquity, the possible existence of Phœnicians on the island at one period and the Basque Spaniards at another. It is proved nevertheless that Ireland knew the harp and the bagpipe from an early time. One point in dispute is whether the Irish harp or the Welsh harp had the earlier origin. Mr. Bunting, a leading authority on these matters, deriving his information partly from old harpers but principally from critical research, expressed a belief that the Irish harp was known for its thirty strings at least five or six centuries ago. One of these old harps is now preserved in Trinity College, Dublin; it is believed to have been played by a noted harpist, O'Neill, more than a century ago at Limerick. Mr. Bunting describes several varieties of Irish harp; such as the common harp, the high-headed harp, the down-bending harp, the harp of Craffin or Crofton, and a portable harp at one time used in ecclesiastical ceremonies.

The important point for us here is the influence exerted by the instrument on the music. Mr. Chorley quotes the melodies of *The Lamentation*, and *Try if it is in Time*, as examples of the seeming caprice, the real deficiency of certain musical intervals, which mark a large section of the melodies of Ireland, probably the most ancient. Attempts have been made to group into classes such quaintly-named melodies as *Lulling Music*, *Music of Cool Shade*, *Wilderness Music*, *Lake Music*, *Flowing Tide Music*, *Lamentation or Wailing Music*, and many others. The old harpers were in many cases blind men, some of whom were poor relations belonging to good families, and eked out a living by itinerant harping. Shelter and food and a kind reception were always ready for them in reward for their music. The name of one of them—Rory Dall—is recorded. He crossed over after a time from Ireland to Scotland, where, as tradition will have it, he played before Mary Queen of Scots. Then there was Ecklin Kane, a blind harper, who wandered through France, Spain, and Italy, was patronised by the Pretender, and

complimented by Lord Macdonald of Skye; but becoming rather a rollicking, riotous fellow, the Scottish gentry sometimes cooled him down a little by cutting his finger-nails so short that he could not harp until they had grown again!

The old Irish bagpipe was very similar to the Calabrian pipe sometimes played by itinerant Italians in the streets of London and others of our large towns. Our author adverts to a queer odd rapparee humour in the Irish pipe marches, and gives the music of one bearing a close resemblance to the impassioned jig danced on the cabin door taken off its hinges, as described by Miss Edgworth, Lady Morgan, and Gerald Griffin.

The home-tour we are taking brings us at last back to England, probably less peculiar in its musical characteristics than the other sections of the British Islands. There is wanting an indefinable something which is found in them, and which also enables the melodies of France, Spain, and Scandinavia to be recognisable one from another. Mr. Chorley states that in looking through the collections of English tunes brought together by Mr. W. Chappell, he was struck with the scantiness of anything equivalent to Scotch and Irish and Welsh melodies in regard to freshness and novelty. But this is a point on which doctors differ, so we must tread cautiously.

English composers and musicians obtained celebrity earlier than English painters, except, possibly, the special class of painters employed on stained glass windows for ecclesiastical buildings. The English madrigals and four-part music of Queen Elizabeth's time are preserved to this day, and are known abroad as well as here. Music, like many other refining agencies, was discouraged by the Puritans, but sprang up again into new life after the Restoration. As to the snatches of song introduced in Shakespeare's plays, doubts are expressed whether the nationality of the music could be clearly established, however characteristic it may be. Mr. Chorley speaks very favourably, however, of Dr. Arne's music to a few of the favourite songs in the dramas of our great national bard. He cites the music to the *Tempest* and *As You Like It*, especially the lovely songs *Where the Bee sucks*, and *Blow blow thou Wintry Wind*, as possessing alike originality, freshness, and beauty. Sir Henry R. Bishop's settings of several of Shakespeare's songs are also admired for their power and animation. Bid me

Discourse, the delicious canzonette By the Simplicity of Venus's Doves, and the Orpheus duet, are named as examples almost wholly due to English inspiration. "Bishop had a fairyland of his own. Peculiarities of character alone stood between him and European fame. And then he fell on evil days, when the music of the Continent was streaming into England, and when those in whose service his life was passed"—i.e., theatre managers and music publishers—"tempted and perhaps constrained him to make concessions to our then popular taste: a luckless and foolish thing if it be done by any artist in defiance of conscience; a sad thing if it be done with acquiescence of conscience." Alas! the bread-and-cheese question intrudes itself here, as many a man of genius knows to his sorrow. It was a good sign that Bishop's music was the best when the words to which he composed it were the best. This denoted a union of poetry and music in the artist, whether or not he ever wrote literary poetry.

The glee is a fine and original characteristic in English music. *Ye Spotted Snakes* was charmingly set as a glee by Stevens. *Nymphs of the Forest* and *By Celia's Arbour* are cited as gems of glee melody, the composer of which, Dr. Horsley, wisely spurned in most instances the setting of any but choice words. This has suggested to our author a sarcastic fling at those composers who have so little love of real poetry that they do not seem to mind whether they waste a melody on the pence table or on a scrap of advertisements from the *Times*. Canons, again, are as characteristic in England, perhaps, as in any other country, some of them quite distinguished for their mastery and elegance. As to the *Catch*, it is even more thoroughly ours. There is nothing at all like it in the music of Scotland, Ireland, or Wales. The tunes seem, as it were, to laugh as they go on in enjoyment of the fun. *Old Chairs to Mend*, *Ah how Sophia*, and many others of kindred nature are musical jokes, melodic pleasantries, as exhilarating to the singers as to the hearers. Mr. Chorley well describes the general character of these effusions: "These odd, fanciful compositions, in which words trip up words, and rhymes and phrases jostle, with as desperate a disregard of common sense as though Hood had wrought the web and sown it thickly with puns, can hardly be appreciated by anyone save he be an Englishman born." Once again, the

hornpipe belongs to us beyond all dispute; the *Sailor's Hornpipe* and the *College Hornpipe* are *sui generis*, differing from the *Highland fling*, the *Scotch reel*, the *Irish jig*, the *Neapolitan tarantula*, the *pas seul* of any other country.

It seems to be agreed among those who judge us without undue partiality that we do not quite equal foreign nations in the production of great instrumental composers and great instrumental players. On the other hand, we English are credited with the ability to sing at sight more readily and accurately than most other nations. Our voices, too, though not of the finest quality in any one particular, are noted for their equable distribution of register, their power of doing justice to all tones, whether high up or low down the scale. Clearness of articulation, however, cannot well be claimed as one of our excellencies; we maul the words very sadly in our singing.

VISITED ON THE CHILDREN.

BY THEO GIFT.

PROLOGUE.

"ANY hope? Oh, ma'am, we wish there was! She's just dying as fast as she can. The doctor says it can't be more than an hour at most now."

"The doctor?"

"Yes, ma'am—not Dr. Hamilton, but the other one. He was 'ere three times yesterday, an' only left ten minutes ago; an' he said it won't be more than an hour now, for she's sinking fast, he said, and the 'stremities are getting cold already."

A servant girl, the last speaker; her face, one pleasant and comely enough at other times, all swelled and blurred with tears, and her neat white muslin apron crumpled into a damp untidy rag, from the same cause, as she stands twisting it between her hands at the gate of one of those old-fashioned, creeper-covered cottages in the region of St. John's Wood. To look at the house, indeed, it might be in the heart of the country, shut in as it is with fruit trees and horse-chestnuts now in full blossom, and high garden walls overhung by closely matted ivy and Virginian creeper rankly luxuriant of pale green leaf and rosy-fingered tendrils. In point of fact the quiet lane in which it stands, and in which there is not even a casual passer-by, is within three minutes walk of "Lord's" and less than ten of one of the most noisy and crowded of London thoroughfares, the

faint hum of which even penetrates to the gate where the little colloquy above narrated is taking place.

There is a brougham waiting outside it. Not one of those tiny toy vehicles which you see drawn up beside the railings in the Row with a little group of men round it, and the head and shoulders of one favoured individual buried in its perfumed recesses, as he exchanges chaff and flattery with the dainty-looking creature smothered in costly furs or laces within. Not a brougham of this sort, with its almost suspicious spick and span newness, its young coachman, and the invariable black-muzzled pug hanging out a superfluous yard of red tongue from the off window; but a handsome, goodly-sized carriage with a double crest on its panels, an elderly Jehu, wide of girth and grey of whisker, holding in the pair of fat bays who stand waving their glossy heads and stamping their feet in impatience at being kept so long; and a footman solemn and pompous enough for a bishop; an equipage altogether in keeping with the high-coloured, sternly-handsome face thrust far enough out of the window to be able to speak in a lowered tone to the maid already mentioned, and whose sobs have broken out again with her last words.

"Hope!" she repeats, crumpling her unfortunate apron still more as she dabs one corner of it into her eyes. "Oh! no, m'm, and such a dear young lady as she was, never a cross word to no one, and nursed me when I was ill once as if I'd been her own sister. Cook and me often said as we'd never get such another mistress nowhere; though cook never thought 'twould be for long, for anyone could see death written in her sweet face. An' to think of her layin' dying up in her pretty room this minute, an' not even able to speak to master when he arrived! Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

If the girl were not crying so unaffectedly herself, the want of any answering sympathy in the face at the carriage window, untouched by either pity or sorrow, might have attracted her attention and caused her to modify the outward expression of her grief; but her face is hidden in her apron altogether now; and though even the wooden propriety of the fat coachman (himself a married man) is dashed with an extra shade of soberness at the thought that the lady, for whom his mistress has called to enquire, lies dying behind those white bedroom curtains puffing gently in the breeze up yonder, the

rigid lines about that mistress's well-shaped mouth do not relax by so much as one hair's-breadth; only at the maid's last words a swift dark flush, less like pain or sorrow than a flash of intense and angry repulsion, passes across her face for a moment, to disappear as quickly again, however, as she asks:

"Your master is with—is upstairs at present, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am. He's never left 'er since he got here, at about five o'clock this morning. We telegraphed for him before seven yesterday evening; but I suppose he were out somewhere and didn't get it. Pore dear mistress! it was the death of her his not doing so; for that was how she brought on the second bleeding. She would keep asking, 'Has he come? Oh! do you think he is coming?' and starting up at every sound till she brought on another fit of coughing; and then when he did come she wasn't even conscious of it, she was that far gone. It would ha' broken your heart to see the look on his face when he found it was so."

It does not seem to have that effect in the description to judge from the look on the lady's face. She only asks, in the same quiet tone:

"And she—your mistress—has never spoken or been conscious since?"

"Never once, ma'am, I believe; and Dr. Beevor said 'twasn't likely now, that she might just sink away from exhaustion in the sort of half-sleep she was in, an' no one know the minute she went—I beg your pardon, ma'am," checking herself suddenly as if struck for the first time by the strange stony way in which she is listened to, "perhaps I oughtn't to be talking this way; but I thought maybe you were an old friend of mistress, and hadn't seen her for some time. I don't remember seeing your face before; an' I've been with 'er nearly a year, but——"

"You are quite right. I am an old friend, a very old one; though I have never been here before. Pray go on telling me all you can. This has been a great shock to me. I had hoped to see your mistress."

"Indeed, ma'am, I'm very sorry. It must be a great trouble to you, and a disappointment too; but Dr. Beevor, he told us, an' Dr. Hamilton as well, that she mustn't be disturbed for no one and nothink. And ten to one she wouldn't know you, ma'am. Nurse said as she barely seemed to look at master, an' every time I've gone near the

dressings-room door—it's left open, like the window, so as to give her plenty of air—she's always been lying just the same: most as if she was dead already, an' him kneeling beside her, poor soul! just as he've been since he first came in."

The flush on the lady's cheek deepens a little, and for the first time there is a visible irresolution about the lines of her mouth. For a moment she hesitates; then, as the servant seems about to step backwards, leans a little more forward, and addresses her in a lower, more hurried tone.

"You say the door is open. I have come a long way—from the country, indeed. You will understand what it would be to you if you had done so, and only to be too late. Do you think I could just stand at the door for one second? One look would be enough."

"Indeed, ma'am, I hardly know. I'm very sorry; but—" the girl is beginning, somewhat embarrassed by the request, when she is interrupted.

"You need not fear being blamed," the visitor says, in a manner slightly more urgent, not to say imperious, than before. "I would not ask you if I had not the—right. I am more than a friend. I am a near relation. Your master would tell you so if he saw me; but it would be cruel to disturb him now; and I need not assure you that I will not run the very smallest risk of rousing her—your mistress."

"Oh! as to rousing her, ma'am"—there are still tears in the girl's eyes; but they brighten, nevertheless. What more natural to the minds of the lower orders than the desire to look on death in any form and for any reason? Sarah has crept to the dressings-room door a dozen times already; and for all her unaffected love and sorrow for her young mistress, there is something not unpleasantly exciting in being able to take another person there—"she's past rousing now, poor dear! if you'll excuse me speaking so free; an' as for him, I don't believe he'd hear a cannon-shot if you fired it off at his ears."

"Then I will go in. It will only be for one look," the lady says with determination, and opening the carriage-door, alights before Sarah has time to reconsider her semi-permission. It is too late now to do so, for with a brief, "Drive up and down till I come out," to the coachman, her interlocutor turns to her, adding simply, "I will follow you," and does so accordingly, through the green door in the wall, and into the garden within.

A pretty old-fashioned garden full of pretty, old-fashioned, sweet-smelling flowers: a garden that, like the house, might have grown up miles and miles away from London soot and smoke and turmoil, instead of here on the very outskirts of it. Low wicker chairs (two of them) under the big thorn-tree on the lawn, now shadowed over with a scented snow of blossoms; a work-basket with a bit of knitting lying forgotten on the velvety grass; a rustic table of twisted wood holding a cracked majolica ash-tray; all this she sees at a glance, and draws a fancy picture of two people strolling out after dinner through the French windows of the pretty little drawing-room to enjoy the evening air and talk over the day's work and pleasures: work and pleasures both sweet in their kind, both falling, falling fast with the last moments of life from the dying woman upstairs, as the sweet white blossoms of the may keep falling, falling on the grass below. The tall lady's dark eyes—eyes with unusually thick level brows above them—note silently the whole sad little picture, and more—note the canary singing its little yellow heart out from its gilt cage in the tiny verandah, and the stands of flowers in the square well-warmed hall; note the dainty water-colours adorning the staircase, the graceful ferns and gleaming gold-fish in the window on the landing; all the thousand and one trifles, which show that much love and not a little taste and money have gone hand in hand to furnish a nest for some precious one; and a strangely bitter expression comes over the handsome face and hardens the observing eye.

Not that she has any look of being poor or wanting in care and taste herself! Her lead-coloured gown is of cashmere so fine and soft that its voluminous train and flouncings make no slightest rustling as she sweeps the carpet. The lace on her mantle is from Brussels, half a yard in depth, and costly enough to make a miser's mouth water. The very sombreness and almost severity of her attire, which would be better suited to a woman of forty, than one of eight-and-twenty, which is all she really is, speaks more than her haughty bearing and fat carriage-horses for the owner being a person not only possessed of wealthy surroundings, but accustomed to them all her life. Has love never mingled with her cup of luxury; or is it only the thought that love, as little as money, can purchase one

half-hour's more grace to the young life before which both have been laid, that makes her lip curl for a moment in a half smile of scorn! Hard to answer this sort of question!

Stepping softly on the points of her toes, and even holding her breath to make no sound, the maid leads the way to a small room furnished as a dressing-room, daintily and prettily, like the rest of the house, but now littered over with the appliances of a sick chamber, medicine bottles and glasses, an open medicine-chest, a man's hat and overcoat lying on a chair; and stopping short, points with her forefinger to an inner door beyond.

"That's her room," she whispers very low. "I won't go in with you, ma'am, they might hear; and please step softly. You won't stay long!"

"I will only stay for one look. They will not see or hear me. I will be very careful; don't be afraid."

The lady speaks in the same tone, but with a firmness which, if the girl were afraid of her composure giving way, must be reassuring. There is no time for more, for in the next moment she has passed into the room, and is standing gazing through the half-open door into the sorrowful chamber within.

Darker there! So dark, indeed, that at first, and coming out of the sunlight, she can only make out a tent-bedstead, hung with cloudy white draperies, and with something like a streak of golden light flung across the pillows at the head of it. Then, as her eyes grow accustomed to the dimness, they see more: a small face, white as the pillows themselves, beneath that wave of golden hair, and something dark—a man's head—buried in the sheets beside it. There is no sound in the room, save a faint laboured breathing, and now and then a gasping sob wrung from the watcher as he kneels there, feeling the last pulsations of the heart, against which his brow rests, grow fainter and fainter till they seem to flag and stop altogether. Then—all of a sudden—there is a rally, a quick pulse or two, a fluttering of the lips over which death has already cast a pale blue tinge, and a sound too low for its meaning to be distinguishable by any but the one for whom it is meant, and who lifts his head quickly, his haggard feverish eyes fixed in hungry yearning on those whose pale lids are lifted at last in a parting look of recognition. Yet he does not speak. He seems afraid to do anything but look

at and fold his arms closer round her till she says his name again, a little louder. Even the unseen visitor still standing by the door can hear the words.

"Henry! You came—at last."

"My own darling, if I could but have reached you sooner! If I had only known! But I never got your telegram till this morning. I had no idea— Would to God it had not been needed: that I could have stayed with you always, and taken care of you."

"If—I get well—you will."

No answer this time. Difficult, indeed, to give any to such a speech, when looking at the speaker one can see the finger of death travelling from the faltering lips down to the flagging heart, and can almost count the seconds it will take to reach there; but the girl herself misunderstands the silence, and the dying voice takes a sharper tone.

"You said so—'in the summer—when you get well;' and it will soon be summer now. I—dear, don't—don't look that way. I will get well. I—Henry, keep me, hold me, don't let me go, or—"

The pitiful appeal, rising gradually into a sob, half terrified, half tender, breaks off suddenly into a weak strangled cry. There is a little stir and confusion in the room, a sound of someone rising to his feet, of pouring water, of a few half-smothered sounds, but what is doing or passing the unmoved witness at the dressing-room door cannot see; for, fearful of being seen herself, she has drawn back from the opening, one hand clutching the folds of her gown, the other pressed against her lips as if to keep down even a rising breath, lest it interfere with her sense of hearing.

No need for that. The silence which follows speaks more loudly than any tongue, and is only broken by a sound terrible to most women's ears, overmastering even this one's composure, and turning her face to the whiteness of that one upon the pillow within—the agony of a strong man's grief.

"Amy! Amy! My darling, my only love, my own—" the voice breaking off between every tender epithet as he pours down passionate kisses on the lips where that Finger now rests, never to be lifted. "Oh, my God, pity me! I can't lose you. Amy, my one love, try to look at me. My wife!"

There is a sound on the staircase outside. Sarah has been telling nurse that

one of mistress's relations—those relations only vaguely heard of hitherto, and who have never before visited the delicate young wife in her pretty home—is upstairs now—has begged leave just to look in on the dying girl; and nurse and cook are both of opinion that Sarah is much to blame, and it is “like her foolishness” to dream of permitting such a thing. “A grand lady in a kerridge an’ pair, indeed! And what if she were? More shame to her never to ha’ come here to see missis before, pore dear! An’ she just dyin’, as anyone could see with ‘arf an eye, for months back. Anyone but Sarah would ha’ told the lady so;” and nurse feels it to be her duty to go upstairs at once, lest the quiet of the sick-room may have been disturbed even now by any unauthorised intrusion. The little colloquy has not lasted six minutes, and the two women, Sarah following nurse in much contrition of spirit, are almost at the top of the stairs, when the tall lady comes quietly out of the dressing-room, and advances to meet them with the same stately ease of step and manner which had overcome the little maid’s scruples before.

Even the nurse, always the most important person in a sick house, is impressed by it, and in place of the indignant remonstrance on her lips, is commencing a much milder,

“Ma’am, you ought not to have been shown up. My poor mistress is——” when she is interrupted.

“Your mistress is dead, I think,” the lady says calmly. “You had better go in to her. You may be wanted.” And so, with hardly a glance at the horrified faces of the two women, or so much as a word of softening or explanation, she passes them both and goes quietly down the stairs and out into the smooth green lawn again, where the sweet white may blossoms are falling, and the fragrant lilacs and golden laburnum boughs are tossing and swaying in the breeze. Her carriage is just outside the door, and the footman jumps down and holds the door open obsequiously; perhaps with a little added attention because of the change in his mistress’s face since he last saw it. Did anything living ever look

at him out of such a dead-white mask, even the very lips blanched to a kind of ashen lividness?

“Where to, ma’am?”

A moment’s hesitation. The birds are singing loudly among the rose-white spires of the horse-chestnut blossoms. The drawn curtains of that open window above are puffing and fluttering in the wind like a white flag of truce. John Thomas wonders if his mistress is going to faint, and, so wondering, manages with well-trained propriety to banish every vestige of expression from his face. Then, with an effort, she recovers herself, and answers him.

“To Charing Cross Station.”

They drive there accordingly, and the lady alights, then turns on the step to give a further order.

“I am going back by train. You will return to the house we have just come from, and send in word that Dr. Hamilton’s carriage has called for him. He will be there by then, I expect, and will probably like to come back with you. If he should not be ready you must wait for him. It does not matter if the horses are kept out rather long for once. Stay, you are to give him this.”

“This” is a note, on the outside of which the doctor’s name is written in pencil; and as the servant takes it his mistress turns from him and enters the station, her handsome head erect, her handsome dress sweeping behind her, her step and bearing as stately and composed as though she had but come from some ordinary call of ceremony; but wearing that same white mask pressed down upon her face as though Death itself had branded it there: the sign manual of some unhallowed act never to be taken away or obliterated on this side of the grave.

And—we shall meet her again years later and note it for ourselves—it never is!

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIXEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER X. "AND SPENDING SILVER HAD HE RIGHT YNOW.

AT ten o'clock Daphne was down at the boat-house again, ready for the aquatic excursion, looking as fresh and bright as if nothing had ever occurred to vex her. She wore a workmanlike attire of indigo serge—no gay fluttering scarlet ribbons this time. Her whole costume was studiously plain, from the sailor hat to the stout Cromwell shoe and dark blue stocking, the wash-leather glove and leathern belt with a broad steel buckle. Madoline's flowing muslin skirts and flowery hat contrasted charmingly with her sister's more masculine attire.

"This looks like business," said Gerald, as Bink ran the boat into the water, and held her while the ladies stepped on board. "Now, Daphne, whichever of us gets tired first must forfeit a dozen pairs of gloves."

"I think it will be you, from the look of you," returned Daphne, as she rolled up her sleeves and took hold of an oar in an off-hand watermanlike manner. "When you are tired I'll take the sculls."

"Well, you see I am likely to be in very bad form. It is four years since I rowed in the University race."

"What, you rowed in the great race? What affectation to talk about being in bad form. I should think a man could never forget training of that kind."

"He can never forget the theory, but he may feel the want of practice. However, I fancy I shall survive till we get to Goring Lane, and that you'll win no gloves to-day.

I suppose you never wear anything less than twelve buttons?"

"Madoline gives me plenty of gloves, thank you," replied Daphne with dignity. "My glove-box is not supported by voluntary contributions."

"Daphne, do you know that for a young woman who is speedily to become my sister, you are barely civil?" said Gerald.

"I beg your pardon, I am practising a sisterly manner. I never met with a brother and sister yet who were barely civil to each other."

They were rowing quietly up the stream, lowering their heads now and then to clear the drooping tresses of a willow. The verdant banks, the perpetual willows, were beautiful, but with a monotonous beauty. It was the ripe middle of the year, when all things are of one rich green—meadows and woods and hills—and in a country chiefly pastoral there must needs be a touch of sameness in the landscape. Here and there a spire showed above the trees, or a grey stone mansion stood boldly out upon the green hillside.

Daphne had so arranged cushions and wraps upon the principal seat as to conceal the mutilated name. Gerald rowed stroke, she sat in the bows, and Madoline reclined luxuriously in the stern with the Maltese terrier Fluff in her lap.

"If we are lucky we shall be at the Abbey an hour and a half before your aunt and her ponies," said Gerald. "It was extremely obliging of her to volunteer the inestimable boon of her advice, but I fancy we should get on quite as well without her."

"It would have been unkind to let her think we didn't want her," said Madoline deprecatingly.

"That is so like you, Lina; you will go through life putting up with people you don't care about, rather than wound their feelings," said Gerald carelessly.

"Aunt Rhoda is my father's only sister. I am bound to respect her."

"I've no doubt the old man of the sea was a very estimable person in the abstract," said Gerald, "but Sinbad shunted him at the first opportunity. Don't look so distressed, dearest. Aunt Rhoda shall patronise us, and dictate to us all our lives, if it please you. By-the-bye, what has become of your devoted slave and ally, Turchill? I expected to find him on the premises when I arrived at South Hill."

"He went up to London last week with his mother, to make a round of the theatres and picture-galleries. They will be home in a few days, I daresay."

"I wonder he can exist out of Warwickshire. He is so thoroughly bucolic, so permeated by the flavour of his native soil."

"He is very kind and good and true-hearted," protested Daphne, flushing indignantly; "and he is your old friend and kinsman. I wonder you can speak so contemptuously of him, Mr. Goring."

"What, my vixenish little Pop—Daphne," cried Gerald, colouring at this slip of the tongue, "is it thus the cat jumps? I would not underrate Edgar for worlds. He is out and away the best fellow I know; but, however much you may admire him, little one, that his mind is essentially bucolic is a fact—and facts are stubborn things."

"You have no right to say that I admire him. I respect and esteem him, and I am not ashamed to own as much, though you may think it a reason for laughing at me," retorted Daphne, still angry. "He taught me to row this very boat. He used to get up every morning at a ridiculously early hour, in order to be at South Hill in time to give me a lesson before breakfast."

"A man might do twice as much for your beaux yeux, and yet deem it no self-sacrifice."

"Don't," cried Daphne. "Didn't I tell you ages ago that I detest you when you flatter me?"

Madoline looked up with momentary wonder at that expression "ages ago;" but Daphne was so given to wild exaggerations and a school-girl latitude of phrase, that ages ago might naturally mean yesterday.

"Daphne, dearest. What has put you out of temper?" she asked gently. "I'm afraid you're getting tired."

"If she gives in before we get to Goring Lane I shall claim a dozen pairs of gloves."

"I am not the least little bit tired; I could row you to Naseby, if you liked," replied Daphne haughtily; whereupon the lovers began to talk of their own affairs, somewhat lazily, as suited the summer morning, and the quiet landscape, where a light haze that yet lingered over the fields seemed the cool and misty forecast of a blazing afternoon.

Goring Lane was an accommodation road, leading down from the home farm to the meadows on the river bank, and here they found a light open carriage and a pair of strong country-made grey horses waiting for them.

Gerald had sent his valet over before breakfast to make all arrangements for their reception. The man was waiting beside the carriage, and to Daphne's horror she beheld in him the grave gentleman in grey who had helped to convey provisions for the Fontainebleau picnic: but not a muscle of the valet's face betrayed the fact that he had ever seen this young lady before.

At the end of the lane they came into a shady park-like avenue, and then to a grey stone gateway, pillared, mediæval, grandiose; on the summit of each granite pillar a griffin of the most correct heraldic make grasped a shield, and on the shield were quarterings that hinted at a palmer's pilgrimage in the Holy Land, and a ragged staff that suggested kindred with the historic race of Dudley.

The lodge-keeper's wife and her three children were standing by the open gate, ready to duck profusely in significance of delight in their lord's return. The male bird, as usual, was absent from the nest. Nobody ever saw a man at an entrance lodge.

The avenue of limes was of but thirty years' growth, but there was plenty of good old timber on the broad expanse of meadow-land which Mr. Goring had converted into a park. There was a broad blue lake in the distance, created by the late Mr. Goring, an island in the middle of it, also of his creation; while a fleet of rare and costly foreign aquatic birds of Mr. Goring's importation were sailing calmly on the calm water. And yonder, in the green valley, with a wooded amphitheatre behind it, stood the Abbey, built strictly after the fashion of the sixteenth century, but every block of stone and every lattice obviously of yesterday.

"It wouldn't be half a bad place if it would only mellow down to a sober grey-ness, instead of being so uncomfortably white and dazzling," said Gerald as they drew near the house.

"It is positively lovely," answered Madoline.

She was looking at the gardens, which thirty years of care and outlay had made about as perfect as gardens of the Italian style can be. They were not such old English gardens as Lord Bacon wrote about. There was nothing wild, no intricate shrubberies, no scope for the imagination, as there was at South Hill. All was planned and filled in with a Dutch neatness. The parterres were laid out in blocks, and in the centre of each rose a fountain from a polished marble basin. Statues by sculptors of note were placed here and there against a background of tall orange-trees, arbutus, or yew. Everything was on a large scale, which suited this palatial Italian manner. Such a garden might have fitly framed the palace of a Medici or a Borgia; nay, in such a garden might Horace have walked by the side of Mæcenas, or Virgil recited a portion of his *Æneid* to Augustus and Octavia. There was a dignity, a splendour, in these parterres which Daphne thought finer than anything she had seen even at Versailles, whither Madame Tolmache had escorted her English pupils on a certain summer holiday.

"The rose-garden will please you better than this formal pleasance, I daresay," said Gerald. "It is on the other side of the house, and consists wholly of grass walks and rose-trees. My dear mother gave her whole mind to the cultivation and improvement of her gardens. I believe she was rather extravagant in this one matter—at least I have heard my father say so. But I think the result justified her outlay."

"And yet you want to build more hot-houses on my account, Gerald. Surely arrangements that satisfied Lady Geraldine will be good enough for me," said Madoline.

"Oh, one ought to go on improving. Besides, you are fonder of exotics than my mother was. And the rage for church decoration is getting stronger every day. You will have plenty of use for your hot-houses. And now we'll go and take a sketchy survey of the house, before we interview the worthy MacCloskie. Has Miss Lawford's gardener arrived, Gibson?" Gerald asked of the gentleman in grey,

who had occupied the box-seat, and was again in attendance at the carriage-door, while a portly butler and a powdered footman, both of the true English pattern waited in the Gothic porch.

"Yes, sir; Mr. MacCloskie is in the housekeeper's-room."

"I hope they have given him luncheon."

"No, sir, thank you, sir. He would take nothing but a glass of claret and a cigar. He has taken a stroll round the gardens, sir, so as to be prepared to give an opinion."

The house was deliciously cool, almost as if ice had been laid on in the pipes which were used in winter for hot water. The hall was as profoundly Gothic as that at Penshurst—it was difficult to believe that the reek of a log fire piled in the middle of the stone floor had never gone up through yonder rafters, that the rude vassals of a feudal lord had never squatted by the blaze, or slept on yonder ponderous oaken settles. Nothing was wanting that should have been there to tell of an ancient ancestry. Armour that had been battered and dented at Cressy or Bannockburn, or at any rate most skilfully manipulated at Birmingham, adorned the walls. Banners drooped from the rafters; heads of noble stags that had been shot in Arden's primeval wood, spears and battle-axes that had been used in the Crusades, and collected in Wardour Street, gave variety to the artistic decoration of the walls; while tapestry of undoubted antiquity hung before the doorways.

These things had given pleasure to Mr. Giles-Goring, but to his son they were absolutely obnoxious. Yet the father had been so good a father, and had done such honest and useful work in the world before he began to amass this trumpery, that the son had not the heart to dislodge anything.

They went through room after room—all richly furnished, all strictly mediæval: old oak carving collected in the Low Countries; cabinets that reached from floor to ceiling; side-boards large enough to barricade a Parisian boulevard; all the legends of Holy Writ exemplified by the patient Fleming's chisel; polished oaken floors; panelled walls. The only modern rooms were those at one end of the Abbey, which had been refurnished by Lady Geraldine during her widowhood, and here there was all the lightness and grace of modern upholstery of the highest order. Satin-wood and pale-tinted

draperies; choice water-colours and choicer porcelain on the walls; books in every available nook.

"How lovely," cried Daphne, who had not been impressed by the modern mediævalism of the other rooms. "This is where I should like to live."

Lady Geraldine's morning-room looked into the rose-garden. She had not been able to do away with the mullioned windows, but a little glass door—an anachronism, but vastly convenient—had been squeezed into a corner to give her easy access to her favourite garden.

Madoline looked at everything with tender regard. Lady Geraldine had been fond of her, and kind to her, and had most heartily approved her son's choice. Tears dimmed Lina's sight as she looked at the familiar room, which seemed so empty without the gracious figure of its mistress.

"I fancied you would like to occupy these rooms by-and-by, Lina," said Gerald.

"I should like it of all things."

"And can you suggest any alterations—any improvements?"

"Gerald, do you think that I would change a thing that your mother cared for? The rooms are lovely in themselves; but were they ever so old-fashioned or shabby, I should like them best as your mother left them."

"Lina, you are simply perfect!" exclaimed Gerald tenderly. "You are just the one faultless woman I have ever met. Chaucer's Grisel was not a diviner creature."

"I hope you are not going to try my sister as that horrid man in the story tried Grisel," cried Daphne, bristling with indignation. "I only wish I had lived in those days, and had the reversion of Count Walter, as a widower. I'd have made him repent his brutality."

"I've no doubt you would have proved skilful in the art of husband-government," said Gerald. "But you needn't be alarmed. Much as I admire Grisel I sha'n't try to emulate her husband. I could not leave my wife in agony, and walk away smiling at the cleverness of my practical joke. Well, Lina, then it is settled that in these rooms there is to be no alteration," he added, turning to Madoline, who had been taking up the volumes on a little ebony bookstand and looking at their titles.

"Please make no alteration anywhere. Let the house be as your father and mother arranged it."

"My sweet conservative! And we are

to keep all the old servants, I conclude. They are all of my father's and mother's choosing."

"Pray keep them all. If you could any way find room for MacCloskie, without offending your head gardener——"

"MacCloskie shall be superintendent of your own special hot-houses, my darling. It will be an easy, remunerative place—good wages and plenty of perquisites."

A grinding of wheels on the gravel, and a tremendous peal of the bell at the principal entrance proclaimed the advent of a visitor.

"Aunt Rhoda, no doubt," said Gerald. "Let us be sober."

They went back to the hall to greet the new arrival. It was Mrs. Ferrers's youthful groom, a smart young gentleman of the tiger species, who had made that tremendous peal. Mrs. Ferrers's roan ponies were scratching up the gravel; but Mrs. Ferrers was not alone; a gentleman had just dismounted from a fine upstanding bay, and that gentleman was Edgar Turchill.

"So glad to see you here, Aunt Rhoda. Why, Turchill, they told me you were in London."

"Came home last night, rode over to South Hill this morning, overtook Mrs. Ferrers on the way, and——"

"I asked him to come on with me and to join in our round of inspection," said Aunt Rhoda. "I hope I did not do very wrong."

"You did very right. I don't think Turchill feels himself much of a stranger at the Abbey, even though it has been a very inhospitable place for the last year or so. And now before we go in for any more business let's proceed to luncheon. Your boat has had a most invigorating effect on my appetite, Daphne. I'm simply famished."

"So you came in Daphne's boat. She rows pretty well, doesn't she?" asked Edgar, with a glance of mingled pride and tenderness at his pupil.

"She might win a cup to-morrow. You have reason to be proud of her."

They all went into the refectory, where, under the lofty open timber roof, a small oval table looked like an island in a sea of Turkey carpet and polished oak flooring.

"It would have served you right if we had had the long dinner-table," Gerald said to Daphne, as he passed her with Mrs. Ferrers on his arm.

"I thought we were going to picnic in the park," said Madoline.

"Daphne—— Neither you nor Daphne seemed to care about it," replied Gerald.

"This is a great deal more sensible," remarked Mrs. Ferrers.

"Oh, I don't know; it's awfully jolly to eat one's luncheon under the trees in such weather as this," said Edgar.

"For Mr. Turchill's particular gratification, we will have afternoon-tea in the cloisters," said Gerald. "Blake," to the butler, "let there be tea at half-past four on the grass in the cloisters."

Daphne could eat or drink very little, though Edgar, who sat next to her, was pressing in his offers of lobster mayonnaise, and cold chicken, cutlets, sole à la maitre d'hôtel, Perigord pie. She was looking about her at the portraits on the walls.

Facing her hung Prescott Knight's picture of the man who began his career by wheeling barrows, and who ended it by building mighty viaducts, levelling hills, filling valleys, making the crooked paths straight. It was a brave honest English face, plain, rugged even, the painter having in no wise flattered his sitter; but a countenance that was pleasanter to the eye than many a handsome face. A countenance that promised truth and honour, manliness and warm feelings in its possessor.

Daphne looked from the portrait on the wall to the present master of the Abbey. No; there was not one point of resemblance between Gerald Goring and his father.

Then she looked at another portrait hanging in the place of honour above the wide Gothic mantel-piece. Lady Geraldine, by Buckner: the picture of an elegant high-bred woman of between thirty and forty, dressed in amber satin and black lace, one bare arm lifted to pluck a rose from a lattice, the other hand resting on a marble balustrade, across which an Indian shawl had been flung carelessly. Face and figure were both perfect after their kind—figure tall and willowy, a swan's neck, a proud and pensive countenance, with eyes of the same doubtful colour as Gerald's, the same dreamy look in them. Then Daphne turned her gaze to the other end of the room, where hung the famous Sir Peter Lely, a replica of the well-known picture in Hampton Court, for which replica Mr. Giles-Goring had paid a preposterous price to a poor and proud member of his wife's family, who was lucky enough to possess it. Strange that a single-minded, honest-hearted man like John Giles-Goring should have been proud of his son's descent from a king's mistress, and should have hung the portrait of Felicia, Countess of Heronville, above the desk at which he read family prayers to his

assembled household. Yes; Lady Heronville's eyes were like Gerald's, dreamily beautiful.

Everybody at the table had plenty to say, except Daphne. She was absorbed by her contemplation of the pictures. Edgar was concerned at her want of appetite. He tried to entertain her by telling her of the plays and pictures he had seen.

"Your father ought to take you to town before the season is over. There is so much to see," he said; "and though I am told that all the West End tradespeople are complaining, it seems to me that London was never so full as this year. Hyde Park in the morning and afternoon is something wonderful."

"I should like to go to the opera," said Daphne rather listlessly. "Madame Tolmache took us to hear Faust one evening. She said that an occasional visit to the opera was the highest form of cultivation for the youthful mind. I believe she had a box given her by the music-master, and that she turned it to her own advantage that way—charging it in her bills, don't you know. I shall never forget that evening. It was at the end of August, and Paris was wrapped in a white mist, and the air had a breathless, suffocating feeling, and the streets smelt of over-ripe peaches. But when we got out of the jolting fly that took us from the station to the theatre, and went to a box that seemed in the clouds, we had to go up so many stairs to reach it, and the music began, and the curtain went up, it was like being in a new world. I felt as if I were holding my breath all the time. Even Martha Dibb—that stupid, good-natured girl I told you about—seemed spell-bound, and sat with her mouth open, gasping like a fish. Nillson was Marguerite, and Faure was Mephistopheles. I shall remember them to the end of my life."

"You'll hear them again often, I hope. Nillson was singing the other night, when I took my mother to hear Wagner's great opera. The music is quite the rage, I believe; but I don't like it as well as Don Giovanni."

Luncheon was over by this time—a formal, ceremonious luncheon such as Daphne detested. It was her punishment for having been uncivil last night when the picnic idea was mooted. And now they all repaired to the gardens, and perambulated the parterre, and criticised the statues: Leda with her swan, Venus with an infant Cupid, Hebe offering her cup, Ganymede on his eagle—all the most familiar personages in

Horne's Pantheon. The fountains were sending up their rainbow spray in the blazing afternoon sun. The geraniums, and calceolarias, and pansies, and petunias, and all the tribe of begonias, and house-leeks, newly bedded out, seemed to shiver in the fierce bright light.

"For pity's sake let us get out of this burning flowery furnace," cried Gerald. "Let's go to the rose-garden; it's on the shady side of the house, and within reach of my mother's favourite tulip-trees."

The rose-garden was a blessed refuge after that exposed parterre facing due south. Here there was velvet turf on which to walk, and here were trellised screens and arches wreathed with the yellow clusters of the Celine Forestier, and the Devonensis. Mrs. Ferrers was a person who always discoursed of flowers by their botanical or fashionable names. She did not call a rose a rose, but went into raptures over a Marguerite de St. Armand, a Garnet Wolseley, a Gloire de Vitry, or an Etienne Levet, as the case might be.

Here, smoking his cigar, which he politely suppressed at their approach, they discovered Mr. MacCloskie, the hard-faced, sandy-haired Scottish gardener.

"You have been taking a look at my grounds, I hear, MacCloskie," Mr. Goring said pleasantly.

"Yes, sir; I've looked about me a bit. I think I've seen pretty well everything."

"And the hot-houses leave room for improvement, I suppose?"

"Well, sir, I'm not wishing to say anything disrespectful to your architect," began MacCloskie, with that deliberation which gave all his speeches an air of superior wisdom, "but if he had tried his hardest to spend the maximum of money in attaining the minimum of space and accommodation—to say nothing of his ventilation and his heating apparatus, which are just abominable—he couldn't have succeeded better than he has—unconsciously."

"Dear me, Mr. MacCloskie, that's a bad account. And yet the gardeners here have managed to rub on very decently for a quarter of a century, with no better accommodation than you have seen to-day."

"Ay, sir, that's where it is. They've just roobed on, poor fellows. And I can only say that it's very creditable to them to do as well as they have done, and if they're about a quarter of a century behind the times nobody can blame them."

"Then we must build new houses—that's inevitable, I conclude."

"Yes, sir, if you want to grow exotics."

"Yet I used to see a good deal of stephanotis about the rooms in my father's time."

"Ay, there's a fine plant growing in a bit of a glass-shed," said Mr. MacCloskie with ineffable contempt. "Necessity's the mother of invention, Mr. Goring. Your gardeners have done just wonders. But with all deference to you, sir, that kind of thing wouldn't suit me. And if Miss Lawford had any idea of my coming here by-and-by——" with a respectful glance at his mistress, as he stood at ease contemplating the spotless lining of his top-hat.

"Miss Lawford would like you to continue in her service when she is Mrs. Goring. Perhaps you will be good enough to give me an exact specification of the space you would require, and the form of house you would suggest. I wish Miss Lawford to be in no way a loser when she exchanges South Hill for Goring Abbey."

"Thank you, sir, you are very good, sir," murmured the Scotchman, as if it were for his gratification the houses were to be built. "This is a very fine place, sir; it would be a pity if it were to be behind the times in any particular."

The head gardener bowed and withdrew, everyone—even Aunt Rhoda—breathing more freely when he had vanished.

"Isn't he too utterly horrid?" asked Daphne. "If there is a being I detest in this world it is he. Were I in Lina's place I should take advantage of my marriage to get rid of him; but she will just go down to her grave domineered over by that man," concluded Daphne, mimicking MacCloskie's northern tongue.

"He is not the most agreeable person in the world," said Lina; "but he is thoroughly conscientious."

"Did you ever know a disagreeable person who did not set up for being a paragon of honesty?" exclaimed Daphne contemptuously.

They roamed about the rose-garden, which was a lovely place to loiter in upon a summer day, and lingered under the tulip-trees, where there were rustic chairs and a rustic table, and every incentive to idleness. Beyond the tulip-trees there was a shrubbery on the slope of the hill, a shrubbery which sheltered the rose-garden from bleak winds, and made it a thoroughly secluded spot. While the rest of the party sat talking under the big broad-leaved trees, Daphne shot off to explore the shrubbery. The first thing

that attracted her attention was a large wire cage among the laurels.

"Is that an aviary?" she asked.

"No," answered Gerald, rising and going over to her. "These are my father's antecedents."

He pulled away the laurel branches which had spread themselves in front of the cage, and Daphne saw that it contained only shabby old barrow, a pickaxe, and shovel.

"Those were the stock-in-trade with which my father began his career," he said. "I don't believe he had even the traditional half-crown. I've no doubt if he had possessed such a coin his pals would have made him spend it on beer. He began life, a barefooted, ignorant lad, upon a railroad in the north of England, and before his fortieth birthday he was one of the greatest contractors and one of the best-informed men of his time; but he never mastered the right use of the aspirate, and he never could bring himself to wear gloves. It was his fancy to keep those old tools of his, and to take his visitors to look at them after they had gone the round of house and gardens."

"I hope you are proud of him," said Daphne, with a bright penetrating glance which seemed to pierce Mr. Goring's soul. "I should hate you if I thought that, even for one moment in your life, you could feel ashamed of such a father."

"Then I'm afraid I must endure your hate," said Gerald. "No; I have never felt ashamed of my father: he was the dearest, kindest, most unselfish, most indulgent father that ever spoiled an unworthy son. But I have occasionally felt ashamed of that barrow, when it has been exhibited and explained to a new acquaintance, and I have seen that the new acquaintance thought the whole thing—the mock mediæval abbey, and the barrow, and my dear simple-hearted dad—one stupendous joke."

"I should be more ashamed of Felicia, Countess of Heronville, than of that barrow, if I were you," exclaimed Daphne, flushed and indignant.

"You little radical! Mistress Felicia was by no means an exemplary person, but she was one of the loveliest women at Charles's court, where lovely women congregated by common consent, while all the ugly ones buried themselves at their husband's country seats, and thought that some fiery comet must be swooping down upon the world because of wickedness in high places. Don't be too hard upon poor Lady Heron-

ville. She died in the zenith of her charms, while quite a young woman."

"Do you think she ought to be pitied for that?" demanded Daphne. "Why it was the brightest fate Heaven could give her. The just punishment for her evil ways would have been a long loveless old age, and to see her beauty fade day by day, and to know that the world she loved despised and forgot her."

"Whom the gods love die young was said of old;
And many deaths do they escape by this—"

"Where did you find those lines, little one?"

"In a book we used to read aloud at Madame Tolmache's, *Gems from Byron*."

"Oh, I see! Mere chippings, diamond dust. I was afraid you'd been at the Kohinoor itself."

"Are we to have some tea, Gerald?" asked Madoline, crossing to them and looking at her watch as she came. "It is half-past four, and we must be going home soon."

"To the cloisters, ladies and gentlemen, to all that there is of the most mediæval in the Abbey."

They passed under a Gothic archway and found themselves on a square green lawn, in the midst of which was another fountain in a genuine old marble basin, a Roman relic dug up thirty years ago in the peninsula of Portland. A cloistered walk surrounded this grass-plot. A striped awning had been put up beside the fountain, and under this the tea-table was spread.

"Now, Lina, let us see if you can manage that ponderous tea-kettle," said Gerald.

"It is the handsomest I ever saw," sleepily remarked Mrs. Ferrers, who had found the afternoon somewhat dreary, since nobody had seemed to want her advice about anything. "But I must confess that I prefer the rector's George the Second silver, and old Swansea cups and saucers, to the highest exemplars of modern art."

DECOYS.

THE most successful method of taking wild fowl in large numbers, without alarm to the rest of the flock, and with little or no fatigue to the fowler, is by the decoy.

The site of the decoy is a sequestered pool, from which curving ditches are dug of the depth of sixteen or eighteen inches, leading from the main water, and covered by an archway of netting; the fowl being taken

by alluring them from the open lake into these fatal retreats. And here, in fact, the knowledge of many, even of naturalists, terminates, for it is not always an easy task to obtain admission to a decoy. When in the hands of illiterate men it is almost unapproachable by any one. "No, no; you must not come near this," is the cry; and they hide their manœuvres against the wild fowl in as much mystery as the Rosicrucians threw around their search after the philosopher's stone. We have to thank a friend, an angler-naturalist in Norfolk, who works his own decoy in that county, for whatever we have to relate of these proceedings.

A decoy to be complete should be sheltered on all sides by thickets and screens of the reed so abundant on the margin of all rivers and broads frequented by wild fowl, so as to present a warm lee side whatever wind is blowing, to render the chance the greater of capturing the quarry. The cuts or ditches are, in fowlers' language, termed "pipes." They are mostly from seventeen to eighteen feet across at the entrance; the covered arched hooped netting runs seven or eight yards up the pipe, and is ten feet in height. The hoops or arches upon which the netting is stretched gradually diminish in size, and the purse-net, which terminates the pipe into which the fowls are driven, is not of greater diameter than a common bow-net for pike and tench. The reed fences are about five and a half feet high, so that a man with a little care may walk concealed behind them. The lower the reed screens are the more free and open the passage appears, and the more readily the birds will enter it. The pipe altogether, measured on the curve, is about seventy-five yards, and the reed screens are each about thirteen feet in length. The aperture in these screens, left for a dog to leap backwards and forwards (of which animal more anon), is about four feet wide. When viewed from the entrance the whole reminds one of a gigantic spider with extended legs; indeed when the purpose of a decoy is considered the simile is not inappropriate. The pipes should be so arranged around the lake to suit different winds. Ducks swim most readily with their breasts to the wind, and, besides, they always collect upon the lee side of the mere. Especially should there be a pipe to suit well the north-east wind, that being the breeze that brings most fowl. In Norfolk the common wild-

duck and the teal form the principal harvest. The widgeon, which in many parts of England is the chief gain to a decoy, in East Anglia are more uncertain in number and irregular in time of migration than the other two species. Sir Robert Browne, writing more than two centuries ago, remarks the great abundance of teal in Norfolk.

Dogs, strange to say, and decoy-ducks, are the direct means of destruction, and are generally used together. Breed, in the dog used as a "piper," is totally disregarded, but he must be small, active, and at the same time docile and ready in coming to his master, perfectly mute, and devoid of all sporting tendencies, taking no notice whatever of the fowl. The colour preferred is reddish or brown, and the more the dog resembles a fox the better. The motive which causes wild fowl to follow the dog is precisely the curiosity which is observed to influence tame ducks to herd up together and approach a dog, when he goes to lap water. Of course care is required in the education of a dog as a piper. The quicker he is in motion and apprehension the better; the more sudden his exits and entrances are through the reed screens the more the attention of the fowl is engaged. This education may be carried to considerable length in a house, by building up furniture and making the canine pupil spring through openings left amongst tables and chairs. The curiosity of fresh fowl is most powerfully excited by the appearance of the dog popping backwards and forwards, seen one instant, and the next disappearing behind the screen. But this attention to his movements when ducks have been very long in a decoy soon wears off, and they regard the dog's antics with perfect apathy.

All species are not alike willing to approach him. The common wild-duck and the teal work capitally to the dog; but the widgeon, although most lively and sportive in the water, does not pay so much attention to the piper. Very often widgeon must be led into a pipe by refuse malt, oats, and whatever food will partially float, the wind at the same time setting from the point of the pipe towards the pool, when a portion of the grain soon finds its way into the open water, and the fowl are gradually encouraged towards the source of its supply. In this way the pochard is often brought under the net in considerable numbers. The widgeon keep picking at the floating food, and the pochards diving for the sunken grain; but on the decoy man showing him-

self, the latter always, instead of proceeding up the pipe, dive or flutter back past him.

The decoy-ducks must be unquestionably tame and familiarised to the sight of man. The feeding them judiciously is an important point. When properly trained they should be fed in the evening in a pipe, just after the wild fowl have flown out of the decoy. Their appetites should be so far appeased that in the middle of the day they are neither very ravenous nor yet indifferent to food. If too hungry, on hearing the faint and almost, to human ear, imperceptible whistle which calls them to assist the decoy-man, they flutter and splash along the water with loud cries, so as to rather alarm than allure the wild ducks. If, on the other hand, they are gorged with food, they may disregard the signal altogether. On hearing the whistle they should swim evenly and steadily forward. Being used to receive their food in a pipe, of course they rather affect than shun it. Any whistle or signal at all is often quite superfluous. The first sight of the dog between the reed screens will bring them. They know that, happen what may, they shall get some barley.

Formerly it was thought necessary that decoy-ducks should be of the direct wild breed; but of late years similarity in feather is the only thing insisted upon; and the tame ducks, if right in plumage, are preferred, as becoming more familiar. They are very soon inducted into their business if fed by the person who is to use them, who should, while they eat, whistle the note he generally uses. A decoy-duck, however, can be too bold. A decoy-duck that does not turn back when the pipe gets very contracted, but goes without hesitation into the purse-net, is held of no value. As it knows the way in, it may also some day turn back suddenly, and show a netful of wild ones how to get out.

To make the above yet more clear, it may be well to detail how the pipe is worked. About one or two p.m. the decoy-man visits his pipes, and, unseen, makes his observations behind the reed screens. Should he see the banks at the entrance of a pipe well lined with fowl, and the wind be pretty favourable, he looks out for a decoy-duck or two. If any are in sight they will probably come in expectation of barley as soon as the dog is put round; but should they be out of sight, the slightest whistle will command their attention, and, if they act their part well, they

will probably bring more or less of the wild fowl to the entrance of the pipe; they seldom persuade them to come further. The decoy-man, posting himself at one of the screens nearest the pool, flings a piece of bread, which the dog does not directly pick up, but performs a circumbendibus, jumping over at the opening before him and returning to his master at the next, thus appearing to the fowl, and then vanishing. If they follow the deceiver, the dog is worked at the next screen going up the pipe, and the decoy-man runs him round quickly or slowly, according to the motions of the fowl, which he can see by peeping through the reed screens. In all the screens a piece of stick is left between the reeds, by moving which, right or left, a momentary small aperture is made for the eye to see what is passing on the other side. There is great nicety in working a dog. Should all go right and the ducks have ascended far enough, and nothing can be seen by the ducks remaining in the pool, the decoy-man turns back and displays his hat behind them. A confused scurry then takes place—all striving to be first in the fatal purse-net.

Novelty with wild-ducks as well as human beings seems a great attraction. When sleepy the ducks will not stir unless the dog has a handkerchief tied round his neck, or something else is done to make him remarkable. The pipes in all the decoys should be turned the same way in each from left to right; if some are turned one way and some another it puzzles the dog, which is apt to work counter.

The Rev. Richard Lubbock, from whose *Fauna of Norfolk* we have obtained confirmation of the correctness of our observations, gives a hint to game-preservers. If wild fowl are lured by hundreds, in spite of their cunning and distrust, it is plain that the tenants of the preserve, nearly as tame probably as chickens, can be persuaded to enter pipes at will. There is always a dry margin on each side for them to walk upon, and the barley belonging to the decoy-ducks is sufficient bait. So for the safety of game-preservers it is incumbent that the decoy-man should be honest.

Although we have said decoying is an easy life to the decoyer, he has much to study. The disposition of different species, the time they have been on the pool, the weather, the wind, the season of the year, are all to be taken into account.

We do not think that decoys are nearly as

plentiful as they were formerly, and some of them in certain seasons do not pay their expenses. London is now inundated with Dutch fowl, which compete with those from Norfolk and Lincolnshire, and carts may occasionally be seen in Yarmouth and Norwich loaded with the same commodity from France and Holland. The sale of game has also tended to depreciate wild ducks, and the sale of partridges keeps down the price of ducks completely in the early part of the decoy season, and the general heat then is too great to ensure them safe carriage to any distance. It may be that when the refrigerating system comes more into general use this difficulty will be surmounted.

Mr. Lubbock, who wrote in 1848, even then alluded to the decreasing number of water-birds in East Anglia. The Norfolk fens, he says, must in days of yore have literally swarmed with different species of birds. If we glance at the position of Norfolk and Suffolk upon the map, we at once perceive that they stand out, as it were, offering an asylum to the storm-beaten bird coming from the ocean. If we consider the great variety of soil to be found in the marshy part of the county, and the way in which swamp and high ground are continually intermingled, it is plain that formerly, ere cultivation was so general as at present, the Norfolk fens must have offered the fairest retreat to water-birds, not only for an occasional visit, but also for the task of breeding and rearing their young. It would appear from the experience of naturalists that water-birds do not so much affect an interminable swamp, with no firm ground mixed with it, as they do places where dwarf trees and shrubs come down to the margin of the marsh. In the original state of a considerable part of Norfolk, birds could often find a habitat of this nature; a hill, perhaps clothed with furze, sloping gradually to the fen. On the margin of the marsh high sedges were intermixed; further on in the distance lay a broad sheet of water, and the approach to it grew more and more a quagmire, until land and water mingled imperceptibly together. Commons of this nature existed in many parts of the county, until the extravagant prices caused by continued war created a general eagerness to enclose all available land. This improvement and extension of agriculture struck the first blow on the feathered inhabitants of the waste; they struggled on, however, through evil fortune, their numbers becoming gra-

dually less and less, until many of them, formerly common, are now with us but a name.

But Norfolk, even in the present state, is the last stronghold of several aquatic species, and in regard to the efficacy of decoys it may be stated that in one decoy alone last winter upwards of three hundred ducks were entrapped in one morning. Hard winters, when the pools and decoys are ice-bound, are not periods of profit; but during recent years a few decoy-ducks anchored in the pipes have been found by their flapping and agitation of the surface of the water to prevent its freezing, and wherever there is open water in such inclement weather there the wild duck will congregate.

Sir Thomas Browne speaks of decoys as abundant in Norfolk, and Blomfield speaks of Sir William, son of Sir William Woodhouse, of a distinguished Norfolk family, who lived in the reign of James the First, as the first in England to erect decoys for taking wild fowl.

The pochard or dun bird is eagerly bought by the London poulterers, as it is deemed excellent eating; the greater part of what appear in the markets are caught in decoys. But the construction and mode of working are perfectly distinct from that wherein the other wild fowl are taken. A decoy for dun birds is called a flight-pond; and has nets fastened to tall stout poles twenty-eight or thirty feet long. At the bottom of each hole is a box fixed filled with heavy stones sufficient to elevate the poles and nets the instant an iron pin is withdrawn, which retains the nets and poles flat on the reeds, small willow boughs, or furze. Within the nets are small pens made of reeds about three feet high for the reception of the birds that strike against the net and fall down, and such is the form and shortness of wing of the pochard that it cannot ascend again from these little enclosures if it would; besides, the number which are usually knocked into these pens precludes all chance of escape from them by the wing. A decoyman will sometimes allow the haunt of dun birds to be so crowded that the whole surface of the pond shall be covered with them, previous to his attempting to take one. Upon such occasions he bespeaks all the assistance he can get to complete the slaughter by breaking their necks. When all is ready the dun birds are roused from the pool, and as all wild fowl rise against the wind, the poles in that quarter are

unpinned, and fly up with the nets the instant the dun birds begin to leave the surface of the water, so as to meet them in their first ascent, and they are thus beaten down by hundreds. At a decoy at Goldanger in Essex, writes Daniel, as many pochards have been taken at one drop as filled a waggon, so as to require four stout horses to carry them away; and the lower birds in the pens have been known to be killed and pressed entirely flat, from the numbers of their companions heaped up above them by the fatal stoppage of the poles and nets.

For further information upon the subject of decoys, Colonel Hawker, Daniel's Rural Sports, Blain's Encyclopædia of Rural Sports, the Field, and other reliable authorities, may be consulted with advantage, and in Lubbock's Fauna of Norfolk two illustrations may be found which give a correct notion of their peculiar formation.

IRISH SUPERSTITIONS.

THE SERPENT'S POOL.

THE Glens of Banagher are visited by all tourists who explore the County Londonderry as far as Dungiven. Stretching up a gentle hill, they are seen from some distance; the natural wood that clothes them grows more stunted as it ascends. Each of the five wooded glens resembles the Dargle in miniature. We saw them first in autumn, when the river was swollen by late rains, and the birch and hazel boughs that dipped into it, were turning yellow and crimson.

We followed the course of the river through the centre glen, from which the others branch off; and now slipping upon stones covered with wet moss, now up to the knees in fern, we reached a deep dark pool surrounded by rocks twenty feet in height, in whose crevices the hardy mountain ash had found footing. It was a gloomy spot, even though rich clusters of scarlet berries, mingled with yellow leaves, drooped over the water.

We had been told that a saint lay buried in the old grave-yard near the entrance to the glens, and that the sand from his grave had valuable properties if received from the hand of a man named Heany, supposed to be a lineal descendant from the saint. Here, then, were marvels grouped together that might reward enquiry, and we resolved to prosecute research.

"Is it ould ancient stories you want, miss?" said a woman who was herding

her cow in the glens. "Weel, then Jamie Roe is the man can tell you all about Lig-na-paisthe, an' the beast that's confined in it; an' about the Banagher sand too. He's upwards of a hundred years of age, an' it jist beats all what he minds."

Acting upon her advice we went to visit Jamie Roe, a little old man, quite blind, who from his appearance might well be a century old. His daughter, a middle-aged woman, was his sole companion. She thanked us for the honour we did him, and said that many people came to see her father because of his great age; but it was not often he had a visit from a lady.

"Is it the story of St. Murtoogh O'Heany you wish to hear?" asked he. "Weel, miss, there's nane livin' could tell it better nor me. There was a big serpent lived in them glens fornenst us, and he was devouring all before him, an' if he had got eating on, he'd ha' destroyed the whole world. The good St. Murtoogh O'Heany was in the world then, an' he was heart sorry for the poor people. He was walking near the glens one day, an' the serpent was lying on the side o' the brae yonder, an' he went too close to him, an' was nearly sucked in by his breath. Then St. O'Heany prayed to the Lord, an' axed him to let him bind the serpent wi' three green rushes. His prayer was heard, and he got power to bind him wi' the rushes. He prayed again that the green rushes might be turned into three iron bands, an' that prayer was granted too. Next he axed the Lord to make the serpent as light as a blind man's ball, that he might be able to put him on his stick, an' carry him to Lig-na-paisthe. Weel, miss, it happened so. The serpent grew light, an' he carried him to the pool that we call Lig-na-paisthe (that manes the hole o' the beast), an' threwed him in, an' there he's lyin' bound wi' the three iron bands till the resurrection day. The saint gave him the half of all diseases, an' the half of the fish that comes down the river for his meat. If you throw anything into the pool, it'll come up the first time an' the second, but it'll be devoured the third time."

"Did you ever see anything thrown in?"

"Troth did I. There was a gentleman went to Lig-na-paisthe one day, an' he was mocking an' sayin' he did na believe there was ever a serpent in it, an' them that was wi' him dared him to throw his dog in. He throwed him in oncet, an' he came up; an' twice, an' he came up; and then the

gentleman laughed, an' says he, 'Where's your serpent now.' 'Try again,' says the others, an' he throwed the dog in again, an' his heart an' liver was all that come up."

"What diseases can be cured there?"

"All kinds of sores, an' wounds, an' crippled limbs, an' fevers. The people comes from all parts to it. It's as great a place as Lough Derg, an' I ha' known them come frae Belfast to it."

"Now tell something about the Banagher sand. Is it true that the saint is buried in the old churchyard, and that the sand from his grave has certain virtues, but only when it is lifted by a man called Heany?"

"Quite true—as true as the Gospel. The race of people called Heany can give the sand, an' there's aye ane o' them livin' convenient to the ould church for that purpose."

"Who gives it at present?"

"I'm the man."

"You? Why I heard that your name was James Roe!"

"Ay, miss," interposed the daughter; "it's 'Roe' he still gets called because his hair used to be red; but Heany is his own name. He's descended from the saint, an' as he was sayin', nane but a man o' the name o' Heany has power to lift the sand."

"Well, I had no idea that I had come to the real Heany who gives the sand."

"He'll lift nae mair o't," said his daughter sorrowfully, "for he's quite dark now."

"Will you have to lift it instead of him?"

"Oh, no; not while there's a man body o' the name. There's a brother o' mine that'll do it. The people comes frae Cookstown an' Draperstown an' Belfast to get it out o' my father's ane hand."

"What is it good for?"

"If you cross the seas wi' a pinch o' the sand you'll no be drowned; an' the house 'ill never be burned that has some o' the sand in it. If twa girls likes the same young man, the ane that has the sand need only throw a wee dust o't on the other girl, an' the sweetheart 'ill never look at her again. If a man was attacked he'd only ha' to throw sand on his adversary, an' he'd fly; an' if there was twa men racing horses, ane that had the sand be to throw a whean grains on the other horse, an' his ain horse 'ud win. Then, miss, it's gude for keepin' witches an' warlocks away. A bag o' sand wi' a twig o' rowan in it suld be hung round the cows' necks, an' divil a fear that they'll be elshot; an' if

nice wee childer had it on them, feen a ane o' them wad be overlooked. The sand has got power, if anybody 'ud throw a dust o't at you, you'd be quite weak in a minute."

"Dinna forget the diaouls, Sally!" cried the old man, who had been listening to his daughter's explanations with much interest. "Dinna forget the diaouls!"

"What does he mean?"

"Why, miss, I ha' seen him doing it twenty times. He'd make a circle o' the sand on the floor in the name o' the blessed Trinity, an' put three diaouls inside it, an' they couldna get crossing the sand—they'd die first."

"That is indeed very strange. Do not people curse the diaoul?"—the cock-tailed beetle, called the devil's coach-horse in parts of England—"because he is said to have shown Christ's enemies the way He had gone?"

"Dear, dear, do you know that? Father, isn't this lady knowledgeable? Ay, miss, you're in the right. When the Jews was searching for our Saviour to take Him, they should ha' axed the men working on the roads where He had gone, an' they wouldna tell; but an army of diaouls all turned up their tails to show the way; an' it's allowed to be a gude thing to kill them. If you kill a diaoul you'll be forgiven seven sins. Father, you be to gie this lady some o' the sand."

"I hope she's no mocking, Sally."

"No, no, father, the lady's too gude to mock. Wad you wish for some, miss?"

"If you please; I shall be much obliged for some."

Sally climbed upon a stool and put her hand into a dark recess above the chimney. She was busy at the window for a few minutes, and then she came forward with a packet of sand carefully tied up in the leaf of a national school copy-book. "But you be to gie it to her out o' your ain hand, father."

"Ay," said the old man gravely; "where is her hand?"

He took my hand in both his own, pressed the packet into it, and, very much to my consternation, said in a voice trembling with real emotion: "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may this keep you from danger, an' bring you gude luck. Amen." We had not been prepared for the little religious ceremony, which he evidently regarded in a very solemn light. We soon after got up to take leave, and my companion, who had

listened silently to my pursuit of information, produced a paper of tea from her pocket, and presented it to Sally, saying: "I hope your father likes a cup of good tea?"

"Sure it isna in payment for the sand, my lady?" asked Jamie Roe anxiously; "for I darena tak' payment for that."

My friend hastened to remind him that we had not even known that his name was Heany, or that he had anything to do with the sand, when we came to visit him, and having dissipated his scruples, we took leave.

As Lig-na-paisthe is associated with a name which is held in honour throughout the entire district, so is another sacred place—the Moat of Moybolgue in the County Cavan—associated with a name; but a name to this day regarded with horror.

The Moat of Moybolgue is a large grassy mound with level crown, something like the Danish forts so common all over Ireland. It lies a few hundred yards distant from a ruined church in an ancient burying-ground, and commands an extensive view of a bleak country with little plantation and many hills and little lakes. A mountain stream flows straight across the old country road that leads to the church, and a few rude stepping-stones serve instead of a bridge.

But this bleak, externally uninteresting spot is so sacred, that crowds of votaries ascend the hill, either to lay a friend to rest in the churchyard, or to pray upon the moat.

Honor Garrigan, the wretched woman whose name is associated with the moat, is said to have lived in the days of St. Patrick, and, one Sunday morning, she rode behind her servant up the hill to church, to receive the Holy Communion from the saint's hand. As they rode along she saw a bunch of ripe blackberries in the hedge, and ordered her servant to stop and let her get off the horse that she might pick them.

"For shame!" remonstrated the poor boy; "for shame! Don't be lookin' at them, for surely you wouldn't break your fast, an' you going forward to receive the blessed communion."

But Honor Garrigan would not listen to his pious warning. She jumped down, and picked and ate the blackberries, and then her hunger grew and grew, and she ate the boy, and then the horse. The congregation pouring out of church saw the horrible sight, called to St. Patrick to save them,

and cried out with one voice: "She has destroyed the boy an' the horse, an' she's coming on to destroy us too!" St. Patrick was only just in time. As she was rushing at the people to devour them, he ran to the moat, and, kneeling down upon it, took aim at Honor Garrigan with his bow and arrow, and shot her dead. She flew into four quarters, which fell in the four corners of the field outside the churchyard, and were buried where they fell, St. Patrick remarking to the terrified congregation: "She'll lie quiet there till nine times nine of her name cross that stream; but when nine times nine of the name of Garrigan shall have crossed the stream, she'll rise up again, and devour all before her; and that's the way the world will be destroyed."

So the Garrigans of the County Cavan, not being willing to hasten the coming of the last day, are very particular not to cross the stream, and will either go by the new road to Moybolgue, or make a long detour to avoid it. Many funeral processions wind along the bleak road, and many devotees make pilgrimages to the moat, in order to pray at the stone on which St. Patrick knelt when he shot Honor Garrigan, and to touch the blessed water that miraculously fills the hollow made by his knee. All around the stone lie pins, offerings from invalids who come great distances to seek a cure. Headaches, blindness, ulcers, warts, and styes upon the eye, are said to be cured by touching the part affected with the holy water, and as after each application the sufferer drops a pin, hundreds of pins now shine among the grass and mosses round the stone.

CEZEMBRES.

Just a measured mile away,
In the lovely Breton Bay,
In the flush of sunset lay
The Island of Cezembres.
And in the whispering gloaming time
Woke memories of the master's rhyme,
And made Shalott's sweet echoes chime,
About unknown Cezembres.

Here there gleams no running river,
Where "light breezes dusk and shiver,"
But the great seas sway for ever,
All around Cezembres;
No "tall towers" to guard the land,
But flowery turf and golden sand,
And grey rocks, that, grim and grand,
Guard all remote Cezembres.

Did Sir Tristram hither come,
From timid bride and alien home,
Weary of his yearning dumb,
To dream in still Cezembres?
And in his harp's wild melodies,
Fling "Iseulte, Iseulte" to the seas,
Sigh "Iseulte, Iseulte" to the breeze,
That swept across Cezembres?

Nay, a holier tale than his,
Of fiery passion placed amiss,
The legend of the island is,
The glory of Cezembres.
For when fair France felt fear and blood,
Sweep across her like a flood,
The shelter for the Holy Rood,
Men found in lone Cezembres.

Here in stealth and dread they came,
Noble, burgher, peasant, dame;
Brave priests in the Holiest Name
Taught in fair Cezembres;
And here the Host was raised on high;
And here beneath the midnight sky,
Men knelt, when kneeling meant to die,
To worship in Cezembres.

Hollowed in the rock it stands,
The painful work of faithful hands;
Witness to cold sneering lands,
The chapel at Cezembres.
And over it the wild winds blow,
And under it the wild waves flow,
As in the Terror long ago,
When God blessed still Cezembres.

With a hushed and reverent awe,
We strangers to its threshold draw;
What though we own a purer law
Than that of old Cezembres?
Who dare question, doubt, or mock,
Where still adoring pilgrims flock,
To the low shrine beneath the rock,
That hallows all Cezembres?

ON THE ROAD IN FRANCE.

PENELOPE AND ULYSSES

ON the faith of what we were told by the smart iron post, indicating plainly with white letters on a blue ground, the direction shown by a neat arrow pointing the way we should go — Département de Seine Inférieure, Route de grande communication No. 357. Villars Ecalles M.3-507—we followed a white straight road whose finish was lost in the haze of distance. The country was open and fertile, covered with farm-houses, each indicated by its protecting grove of trees; groves that in the mass gave the wide plain a pleasant sylvan aspect. Here and there on either hand village spires showed on the vast undulating plain, and the tinkle of their bells could faintly be heard. Lines of cattle feeding, each tethered to its own iron peg, were the only living creatures to be seen, except indeed a pair of magpies that kept flying across the road just in front of us. We walked on and on without any signs of approaching the humblest hamlet even. Our legs began to tire of metronomy: they must have measured some metric thousands since we passed the post: the metre was long and the tune endless. Either the post had deceived us or we had missed some obscure bifurcation. And then the road, which we had firmly contended must lead somewhere, began to dwindle, first to a mere field-track, then to a scarcely visible

footpath. In the end the footpath itself ceased to exist, at a ruinous but still lordly gateway, whose heavy stone piers were covered with moss and lichen, while on each rusty bar of the elaborate iron-work grew a collection of feathery grasses.

That gate surely has not stirred on its hinges within the last half-century; and yet people have been here before us, witness the half-effaced foot-track. Perhaps like us they have come thus far, gazed hopelessly through these iron bars—— But to turn back, never! Are we not in France, where there is generally a way round the sternest prohibitions; where they put up formidable gates with huge locks, but don't mind people climbing over the wall or scrambling through the gap. Exactly; there is the gap.

A soft grassy avenue, still and solemn, leads to where neglect and decay are replaced by signs of culture, exhibited in a wild careless grace, and then we come upon a bright sunny clearing, where a red-brick eighteenth-century chateau stands basking among its terraces and walled gardens. And actually we trespassers find ourselves in a warm secluded paddock, where garments are hanging out to dry: not vulgar shirts and homely blouses, but sublimated garments, texture of gossamer, hue of driven snow, swelling out balloon-like in the soft breeze. We retire stealthily, and just in time, for a bright-looking maid trips along from the house, a handsome silky-coated setter stalking solemnly at her heels. Then a blackbird begins to pipe from the hedge, as if softly recalling the ancient rapprochement of maids and blackbirds. Is the queen in the parlour? we wonder—anyhow we shall soon know, for the only path we can follow leads just past the open windows of the grand saloon. Through lace and damask, through a vista of porcelain and rich furniture and costly hangings, we see framed in the windows opposite a charming prospect of sunny glades stretching out into a soft valley, with suggestions of the folds of a broad river; hills upon hills beyond in dim and shadowy alignment. A graceful girlish figure leaning against the window jamb turns towards the prospect in an attitude of vague expectancy; while in the shade sits a lady of ancient days, with snowy curls à la Marie Antoinette, bending over her work-frame. Perhaps on the white silken ground she is embroidering golden lilies: a banner of St. Louis ready for the day when the clocks shall turn back,

and the rivers run up hill. And all is still, solemn, and vaguely expectant, as if this were an enchanted palace where life had stood still for a century.

After all, it is a relief to see at the end of another shadowed avenue the glare of a white road, and the heads and shoulders of people jogging along in their market carts—and so, suddenly, jumping over some posts and chains, into full life again, past farms and stacks, with dogs barking and poultry clucking, and women scolding, and nobody waiting for anyone in particular. It is pleasant, too, to see that we are skirting the edge of this wide tableland, and catching glimpses every now and then of far-reaching prospects into the valley. Here is a village at last—but alas! not Villars Ecalles—with its church, its priest's house, where everything looks faded and unkempt, and its café opposite, which is also a baker's shop. At the café stands a big yellow cart with a sturdy little pony in the shafts, while a tall lantern-jawed man is slowly taking in a cargo of huge mahogany-coloured loaves. These loaves, no doubt, are for the provisioning of some smaller village where there is possibly a church, and certainly a café, but no resident baker. And yet that village, bakerless as it may be, will have its maire, its municipal council, its town-hall; which is just as it should be, after all, and a practical lesson for us English, who talk about self-government, but possess it not. By the church stands another finger-post showing the way to Villars Ecalles, and we push on in the direction indicated by the arrow. Presently the road divides, and just then the yellow cart overtakes us and we ask for directions. "Ah, it is Lasacalle you want," cries the bread-carrier after a moment's puzzled bewilderment. "Yes; there is the road, but it may be difficult to get there for vous autres." He politely regrets that he is not going our way, for he has plenty of room in his cart. After persevering awhile in the way pointed out, a winding road dipping resolutely into the valley, we come to another sign-post showing the way to Villars Ecalles, and here we begin to appreciate the difficulty suggested by the deputy baker. For while we have been coming down hill some hundreds of feet in the last mile, here we are shown a white steep road winding up the flank of a burly buttress of a chalk down, a sort of Abyssinian rock fortress. It is too much for human nature. If Villars Ecalles is located at the top of that mountain, there

it may stay, lonely, unvisited, as far as we are concerned.

It was at Rouen that we were first put upon the track of Villars Ecalles; at Rouen, in the Place Haute Vieille Tour. Yes; even the name has a pleasant old-world ring about it—the "place of the high old tower"—and the reality does not belie the name; the last bit of old Rouen left, perhaps, after the zealous labours of its provincial Haussmann. Ancient archways, gloomy halls, with rude and massive columns, lead into a noisy market-square, where the cackle of poultry and the gabble of buyers and sellers are sounding all daylong. Round about are dark mediæval buildings with ranges of mullioned windows, and quaint dormers on the tall steep roofs. Something charmingly composite—half temple, half oratory—that serves as a porch to the cloth halls, was connected once with that curious old custom, according to which the magistrates of a city yearly gave the pardon of a condemned criminal in response to the demands of the populace. This curious bit of renaissance, lightsome still and youthful with its only three centuries or so of decay, projects boldly into the square, and throws out the gloomy darksome mass behind. Seen as we saw it backed by heavy clouds, with wan rays of sunshine streaming over the roofs, and lighting up the projecting temple while they left the more ancient buildings in deeper gloom, there was something wonderfully effective about the scene. And over it all rise the two grand western towers of the cathedral, and you can even forgive the rigid iron spire that crowns the whole. Well, in this old-world spot is placed a museum. Nothing in the way of bricabrac, mediæval armour, and old Gallic pots, as you might expect from its surroundings, but a plain prosaic museum of textile manufactures. In appearance it is not unlike a room in a Manchester shipping warehouse. There sits a quiet old gentleman pasting patterns into big paper books; while, on screens about the room, are displayed specimens of various fabrics ancient and modern. Ancient comparatively, that is, for remembering that we are upon the site of the palace of the old Norman dukes, with the old world looking in through the windows, the eighteenth century seems like the day before yesterday. And yet far away, too, seem the race of men such as he, for instance, for whom were designed that charming chintz dressing-gown and waistcoat. Here too is a pattern-book of

Oberkampf, the shrewd German craftsman who managed to hit the taste of the marquises and fine dames of old France with imitations of Indian and Persian painted cottons; soon to be replaced by "articles pour paysans," of which we have patterns here, crude and violent in design and colours—patterns that seem to dance the Carmagnole and shout "Mort aux aristocrates." A turn of the leaf, and we are in the heavy insipidity of the First Empire. Out of all these rags and scraps of a world gone to dust conspicuously shines a simple lilac sprig on a white ground, the first real cotton print—a pattern that has lived through all kinds of social changes; that may have covered the white shoulders of a powdered marquise, have fluttered in the gigot sleeves of our grandmothers, and in these latter days may be seen on our own doorsteps in Mary the housemaid's morning-gown. But has Oberkampf anything to do with Villars Ecalles? In a material sense, perhaps not; only in turning from Oberkampf's patterns to those of some living, going manufacturer, we found his local habitation thus designated, and forthwith sprang up the desire of visiting the place, and viewing its industrial establishments: a desire now pretty well quenched, you will remember, and not sufficient to nerve us to the assault of the rock fortress.

So we saunter on, now fairly in the valley—a valley fertile and well wooded, closely hemmed in by hills which are covered with foliage to their summits—and presently we come to a bridge with a quick limpid stream gurgling through its arches. The map tells us that this river is called the Austreberthe, but we beg leave respectfully to doubt it. Certainly no one in the neighbourhood knows it by that name. It is just la rivière, neither more nor less; and the oldest inhabitant has never heard it called anything else. How indeed should the swift bright little river come by such a barbarous name? How has the sweet Celtic water-sprite been transformed into a heavy Frankish saint? The river had a real name once upon a time, no doubt. But the Norman rovers langsyne must have made a clean sweep hereabouts, so that the very names of the rivers have been lost. Nor could they have spared the head Druid of the parish, nor the oldest inhabitant, nor even a woman of them all who might have whispered hereafter to the children of her new lord how their mother's people once dwelt by such and such a stream. And thus the river may

have gone on wanting a name for ages; till a worthy Dom Somebody, compiling parish histories in some priory parlour for the benefit of future time, found a neighbouring church under the protection of some such saint, and filled up the gap. These speculations are interrupted by the soft clamour of a bell, responded to by other bells at varying distances; and these tocsins are the signal for the display of certain signs of life. In this lonely sylvan valley such things are rather startling; the clatter, for instance, of multitudinous sabots upon the hard roads, the general chirping of voices. A turn of the road, and the source of this animation comes to light—the sources rather, for there is a regular string of them, factory beyond factory.

The marvellous thing is that with all these factories the valley still retains its quiet country aspect. Where there is a patch of sky visible—and clouds are coming quickly up to obscure it—that patch is of as deep and heavenly a blue as though there were no tall chimneys within a hundred miles. And the very chimneys wear a sympathetic unobtrusive aspect. After all there is nothing necessarily objectionable in a tall chimney-shaft; indeed, when rising from a substantial, well-designed base, as here, the effect is even pleasing. At all events, it is as respectable an object as a triumphal column, that says, in effect, "Much slaughter done here;" or an obelisk, with its hieroglyphics writ in human blood.

A sharp shower of rain drives us to seek shelter in a cottage that stands in an orchard, and a little way from the road: a decayed-looking place, with an earthen floor and a wide open hearth, where a few sticks are smouldering under a big earthenware marmite. On one side of the hearth sits an old woman, yellow and withered, a red rim about her lack-lustre eyes. She has a wheel in front of her, and is gently turning it; while from a dozen or so of twists of cotton, each stuck in a wire eyelet, issue as many threads, that the old lady is thus slowly forming into one harmonious whole. Slowly enough, indeed, for there are many little interruptions: a thread breaks, and must be pieced by the withered, trembling hands; one of the twists of cotton runs out and has to be replaced, while the core of blue cardboard is dropped on the floor; then a kitten makes a raid on the whole operation, and has to be disentangled; and finally, after all these embarrassments, old Elspeth must solace herself with a pinch of

snuff. All this engrosses her so much that she is quite unaware of the presence of strangers.

"But you are welcome to stay as long as you please, messieurs," says a brisk but faded-looking young woman, who has just come in with a couple of children hanging to her skirts; only she must be excused if she sees about her household matters, for she expects Ulysse, her husband, home from the filature for his dinner each moment. And for dinner the table is laid in a trice. So many white bowls and a huge twelve-pound loaf in the centre. Then she goes to her buffet—the pride of her heart, evidently, with its glass front showing the family porcelain and sundry decanters and glasses, ballasted below by the store of household linen. Penelope has no scruple evidently about entertaining guests in the absence of her lord. She has the key of the cellar, too—in this case also the nuptial chamber—and is not sorry that the strangers should see and admire the old mahogany bedstead piled halfway to the ceiling with mattresses and palliasses, and covered with a splendid red quilt.

Penelope reappearing with a big jar—a fine old jar of gris de Flandres that holds about a gallon—foaming with cider is a pleasing and welcome sight. There is something Homeric in this unstinted hospitality. Dame Elspeth in the corner brightens up, but does not cease to turn her wheel. The cider is really not bad. It all comes out of the orchard in front, explains Penelope. Yes; it is very nice to have this little plot of land about the house; in good years for apples the produce pays the rent, and Penelope would be sorry to give up her little cottage and go to live stewed up in a town. But, then, if the filatures stop working, they cannot all live on cider-apples; and Ulysse is too delicate to work in the fields. But why should they stop working these factories? Penelope does not know, but she has heard that the English are underselling everybody. We comfort Penelope a little by reminding her that England is no nearer than it used to be, and that the work-people there had troubles of their own in the way of short time and lower wages. Penelope brightened up at this, having the comfort of knowing that other people were feeling the smart that she felt; and, after all, perhaps it was not the English who were to blame so much as the war, since which everything had been so dear.

Penelope had something to say about the

war. Yes; they came through here, the Prussian soldiers; she thought there would never have been an end to them. They did no harm, however, to her or hers. No, they were not méchants, those Prussians, and they were sociable; not that they could ever be brought to understand French; but their own language was very easy to learn. This last was a startling affirmation to one of Penelope's listeners, at all events, who had muddled his brains and cramped his handwriting in the fruitless study of the language. But Penelope spoke from experience. She had, then, acquired the German tongue? But yes—perfectly; in fact, nothing could be easier. It was just this: *Crapôt! crapôt! crapôt!* repeated indefinitely. Penelope rattled out her shibboleth to our intense bewilderment, till she stopped, quite out of breath. "Yes," she repeated, in all seriousness; "it is quite true; they speak nothing but that." And then, seeing a smile beginning gently to steal across our faces, Penelope rippled over too into laughter. The children laughed also, and the old grandam out of sympathy, till quite a peal of merriment echoed through the cottage, and they all began to shout in chorus: "*Crapôt! crapôt! crapôt!*" while the children jumped about like so many frogs. Yes, frogs! Then sudden light burst in upon us; a light bringing out into strong relief the simple German mother-wit and its appreciation by the keen Latin intelligence. Half a century ago it was quite usual with us to call a Frenchman froggy, or *Monsieur Crapaud*. Well, the Germans are more tenacious of these international amenities; and these simple Germans, by way of making themselves agreeable to their unwilling hosts, had this "*Crapaud*" constantly in their mouths. One realises the thing in a moment; the serried columns of brass-topped helmets pouring along the country roads as the peasant women and their children peer at them over the gates, in half-frightened curiosity, while the sandy-faced soldiers wink their steel-coloured eyes, and murmur encouragingly, "*Crapaud! crapaud!*"

In the middle of our rejoicing we hear the clatter of sabots. The children run out, calling "*Papa!*" and Penelope at once runs to the fire and gives the soup a tremendous stir. It is the bonhomme; it is Ulysse himself who enters, kicking off his sabots at the door; a sallow man in a blue blouse with a white comforter about his neck. If he feels surprised to find strange guests

beneath his roof-tree, he is too polite to show his feelings. But he has no time to spare, being already late for dinner; and, while the wife pours out the soup into the bowls, Ulysse takes out his pocket-knife, and having duly crossed the new loaf with the point of it, cuts himself a huge hunk of bread. The rain is pattering noisily among the leaves outside, and Ulysse begs his visitors not to think of leaving till the shower is over. In the meantime he is quite as communicative as the requirements of bread and soup will allow. Ulysse is what they would call in the manufacturing districts, I fancy, a self-acting minder; that is, he minds the spindles of a self-acting spinning frame. And at this, working some twelve hours a day, he earns a daily wage of from three francs to three francs and a half. When his children are old enough to go to the factory he will be better off. In the meantime he does not complain, if only the apple-trees yield well, and if they do not throw open everything to the English. Ulysse is vaguely uneasy on both these points, but more so about the apples. For the apple-blossom has been cut up by *la lune rousse*. No; the east winds had nothing to do with it. It was the red moon—nothing works so much harm as that. But as to how the red moon differed from the one we are in the habit of seeing, Ulysse could give no explanation. Simply it was *la lune rousse*; he could not get beyond that. And if apples are scarce, as well as work—Ulysse shrugs his shoulders expressively. And then there is the good mother, he goes on, indicating with the point of his knife the old lady in the corner, who is taking her soup and crust on her lap; she can earn a few francs a week now; but they talk of not giving out any more cotton to hank. Poor old dame! if she could be sure still of her soup and bread, it would surely be no great hardship to be released from the turning of that eternal wheel.

The rain ceases suddenly, a patch of blue shows overhead, and then a sunbeam turns the raindrops on the leaves into diamonds. We must resume our wanderings. We follow the valley along a pleasant country road, passing every now and then the gateway of some factory. All these factories are clean and nicely kept, with neatly-gravelled courts set about with trees and shrubs; the manager's house close by with its flower-beds and cheerful home-like aspect; everywhere a

pleasant hum of life. Presently the valley opens out, showing a more thickly populated district. Rows of cottages flush with the road, with shops here and there, and cafés galore and gas-lamps. It is like the approach to a great city. Bands of young women, with tufts of cotton waste in their dark locks, are walking arm in arm along the middle of the road, freely offering their opinions on current events. Yes; it is like the approach to a big manufacturing city; but the city itself does not appear.

Here a long handsome railway viaduct spans the valley, and passengers from Rouen to Havre see spread out below them this busy industrial region. Here too is a station high above the valley, and when you reach it you have quitted the manufacturing zone and reached the agricultural level. Here is a huge church recently built in what we call the Norman style, but which French archæologists, with a modest disclaimer of exclusive rights, term the Romanesque. One wonders if they ever get near filling this big church. They do not get Ulysse here very often, you may be sure, nor Penelope, except when she makes her Pâques once a year. Close to the church is a neat country auberge, where hay-carts stop and horses bait. Here we must be almost as high as Villars Ecalles. Yes; our host at the auberge who pours out the foaming bock—it is marvellous to see how beer, the light brisk ale of the German type, is superseding other drinks in this part of France—our host knows Villars Ecalles quite well. And it seems we have passed through it without knowing it—the manufacturing part of it. Ulysse must have been a Villars-Ecallien. As for the rest of it—why there was no rest; nothing but a church and smithy.

Our next move is to the station, where there is nothing to remind us of industry, everything being so quiet and sleepy, except some coal-trucks which men are leisurely unloading. The coal-trucks suggest a mental query: Have we not been accustomed to regard nearness to coal and iron a necessary condition of successful manufacture? While here, surely coal must be as dear as in a London lodging-house, and every scrap of machinery comes from England. And yet cotton-spinning and weaving seem on the whole to thrive. There are cotton princes here as well as in England, and the work-people have on the whole a comfortable and contented look.

Our journey is not a long one; only

some few miles further up the valley to Pavilly, which may be said to be the head town hereabouts. In the railway-carriage sits a huntsman in blue and silver, with snowy-white cords, and a huge hunting-horn over his shoulders. It is late in the season for hunting. The "nasty stinking violets" have themselves disappeared, and the woodlands are in full leaf; but it seems that deer and wild-boar are in the category of destructive animals that may be hunted at any time, certain formalities having been gone through—must be hunted, indeed, at the requisition of the cultivators round about the forests. Our arrival—or rather that of blue and silver—is eagerly awaited at the station. At the bottom of the hill, in the very middle of the town, is the pack of hounds; the dogs reposing in groups, yawning, catching each other's fleas, and looking generally bored. Horses, grooms, whippers-in, are in attendance, but the dogs regard them not. Only when the huntsman appears there is a general joyous movement, tails wagging, and couples clanking merrily. Away they go down the street, while the population turn out en masse to look at them. Then the town resumes its accustomed quietude, qualified with a faint buzz of spindles and an occasional gush of escaping steam. There are big factories here, employing a thousand hands or more each, but it is a quiet little place for all that, with nothing more tempting about it than the pastrycooks' shops. But appetites like ours are not to be assuaged at a pastry-cook's.

For hunger now begins to assert its claims. We have missed breakfast in our rambles—it will be rather hard to lose dinner also, in order to catch the train to get away. Some good genius must have guided us down a narrow entry into a grand old kitchen, where the little daylight that penetrated was flashed back from innumerable saucepans, copper and tin, that glowed like gold and silver. The presiding genius was a stout buxom landlady, whose face glowed a hospitable welcome. Something to eat! Most assuredly. What do we say to a roast chicken, quite ready; some little fish that are ready to jump into the pan—these with biftek aux pommes, and an omelette perhaps. In fact, what one had longed for, but scarcely hoped to find. In the *salle-à-manger*, a neat-handed Phyllis was busily ironing snowy-white linen, the little room full of it, overflowing in billowy heaps. But Phyllis, blushing and laughing, speedily cleared the decks.

When hunger was appeased, and the banquet was succeeded by the fragrant coffee and reflective pipe, our hostess appeared to ask how we had fared, quite ready to plump into a chair, and plunge volubly into talk.

If there is anybody who knows about filatures and tissanderies it is surely she. Is she not in the middle of them, and don't they all come to her house? There is one of them now smoking his cigar in her bureau, if monsieur would like to see him. Monsieur is English, no doubt, and probably has an agency in coal? Well, this is the place for him. And he need not feel doubtful about getting his money neither. Ah! they are all solid about here. Rich to a marvel, but not with much show. There is Monsieur C., who keeps the hounds, and lives at the grand chateau up above there; and Madame D., who is devout, and gives unheard-of sums to the church; but these have little to do with affairs, *bien entendu*. No; it is the directors who will make monsieur's little affair. Well! who knows them all so well as she? There is M. Jolivet and M. Dupean, and the Englishman; yes, there is an Englishman, tall like monsieur, who walks over with his long coat and his big dogs, to distract himself no doubt.

Some other day we will make the acquaintance of these gentlemen, and offer them our superior dry Silkstone, our fine nutty Welsh steam, and so on. But for to-day, time presses, and we must make for the station. Already it is growing dusk, and the waiting-room is all in gloom. Sundry figures can be dimly discerned lounging on the benches, while the children of the neighbourhood have turned the *salle d'attente* into a play-room, and their shrill voices and laughter echo hollowly in the emptiness. Presently the station-master comes in and lights the lamps, and the children scurry off. Then enters a whipper-in; in blue and silver he, but not so brilliant as the huntsman naturally; he carries a big market-basket over his arm, his long boots are splashed with mud. No; they did not kill to-day. They began too late for one thing. The piqueur was late, and even then monsieur was not ready, and after that the piqueur—everybody knows how obstinate he is—he would not listen to those who knew better than he, and so on. Now arrives an elderly man, grizzled and well brushed, in a *paletôt* of the severe model that denotes the *propriétaire*; and immediately after a vendor of *terra cotta*

busts, who with a quick glance around singles out the man of means and accosts him. M. Paletôt, who always gives himself any small distraction that does not cost money, courteously examines the man's stock. There is the big bristling head of M. Thiers, his set smile, and his spectacles; these last a little too prominent perhaps for high art. Yes; our bourgeois admires that, and puts it on one side for further consideration. As for M. Gambetta, with his air of leonine conductor of an orchestra of wild animals—well, he is not quite certain that the likeness is satisfactory; and he looks quite coldly at a severe female head typical of the republic. And, after all, they are dear! Well, the pair for twenty sous then. But no; for on consideration our worthy M. Paletôt finds that he has no room for them. The art-dealer covers up his images with a sigh. Decidedly, he mutters, addressing his gallery of busts, it is no use your showing your noses till we reach Bolbec. And then the ground shakes, and a porter throwing wide the door announces that passengers going towards Havre are permitted to take their seats. And we all push forward, our merchant in terra cotta along with the rest.

VISITED ON THE CHILDREN.

BY THEO GIFT.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I. THE NEW TENANTS AT HILLBROW.

A HOUSE with many gables standing on the edge of one of the many roads between Epsom and Dorking, and only separated from it by a thick laurel hedge, tall enough to conceal the lower windows altogether. A pleasant, old-fashioned house, covered-up with creepers of every sort; wistaria, with its pale green leaves and bunches of lilac bloom, roses red and white, and ivy binding it close and warm in an ever-green mantle through every change of season. A low, rambling, non-pretentious building, with quaint little lattice-paned windows set under the eaves, an overhanging red-tiled roof, and a little village of out-buildings like a succession of after-thoughts.

This was Hillbrow.

And until Mrs. Dysart and her daughters came to live there this was about all that anybody knew of Hillbrow: neither the house, nor its associations, being at all interesting or admirable to the generality

of the inhabitants of Chadleigh End, the village to which (though keeping its distance) it rightfully belonged. What was there after all in a dull, shabby-looking old house, almost hidden behind a hideous laurel hedge, and exposed to all the vulgar dust and noise from the high road? Chadleigh End, with its mingling of suburbanism and rusticity, its picturesque cottages and brand-new Gothic villas, looked down on the ramshackle old house with distasteful contempt, and would fain have seen it blotted out altogether in favour of some gentleman's mansion "with all the newest improvements;" yet had it a history of its own, notwithstanding, and one perchance of more interest to the antiquarian than many of the more comely dwellings in the neighbourhood.

Once in its time—a long time ago now—Hillbrow had been a wayside inn, and rejoiced in the name of the King's Lion; meaning (so chronicles testified) the King's Sirloin. Time, however, and the tongues of Surrey yokels had long ago corrupted the name into the form above given. In the days of Epsom Wells, and of the merry monarch who knighted the joint aforesaid, it was a place much frequented by people who were called into the neighbourhood by the fame of the Epsom waters, but who had either found no room in that gay little town itself, or preferred the rustic quiet and liberty of this homely resting-place. Travellers, too, wending their way on horseback between London and the small township of Leatherhead with its—now long defunct—aroma of hides and tan-pits, stopped to bait their steeds for the last time at the little hostelry, or to wash the dust from their own throats with a draught of that good strong ale for which the village of Chadleigh End was then as much noted as Cheam for "juicy beef," or as an old Surrey rhyme goes:

Sutton for good mutton,
Cheam for juicy beef,
Carshalton for a pretty girl,
And Ewell for a thief.

Tramps, likewise, stayed to rest their weary limbs on the long bench, which stood under the eaves when no churlish hedge raised a screen between house and road. Grand gentlemen, in powdered wigs and scarlet coats laced with gold, put up at the inn in the winter, when Chadleigh Hall was too crammed with other guests for the hunting season for its owners to find room for them (and, indeed, the said gentry were not ill-pleased at the exchange; the serving-wench at the inn being comelier, more

roguish of eye and willing of speech, than those within the mossy park-wall which bordered the other side of the road for three-quarters of a mile), so that altogether the hostel drove a thriving trade, and had its stables noisy with stamping steeds and shouting ostlers, and its cow-sheds stocked with the sleek well-conditioned animals from which its guests were provided with such cream and butter as not the Hall itself could rival.

But these were days long past and over now. So long that few people in the neighbourhood even knew that they had existed, or that the house had ever borne another name from that by which it was known at present. The half-hatch doors and latticed casements had given way on the ground-floor to French windows, and the bowling-alley to a croquet-lawn. The long bench was gone, and the laurel hedge raised instead; and though the roomy stables and outbuildings were still in existence, they were for the most part grass-grown and untenanted, save by Sybil's pony and Jenny's tame rabbits; while the whole establishment over which Mrs. Dysart reigned, and by whose aid she had contrived to so alter and improve the place within doors that it had gradually become one of the prettiest and most tasteful in the neighbourhood, consisted of two maids and an odd man of uncertain age, and occupation varying from gardener to groom and upholsterer.

"But though the Dysarts are not well off they are such thoroughly 'nice' people." So the fine ladies about Chadleigh End would say. "Quite people to know. Oh, we never were inside the house before they took it. No one could, you know, after the horrors that used to be there. But these people are quite different; cousins of Lord Dysart's, the Shropshire Dysarts. Everybody knows them." Which, whether every one did or not, settled the question, and proved the new inhabitants of Hillbrow to be in every way desirable.

As for the "horrors" alluded to, they were simply these. After being unlet for some time, and getting into a very dilapidated condition, the house had fallen into the hands of people whom no one knew, or wanted to know; some plebeian Smith, who might have come from Shropshire or any other place; but who was certainly not connected with any noble family, and who used to drink freely at Epsom, being frequently met with in a maudlin condition on his way home. When the Smiths were

gone it became the home of some even more plebeian Wigginses, whereof the husband did worse than drink; he kept a butcher's shop at Ewell, while his wife washed at home and gave the public generally a liberal view of the nine little Wigginses' shirts, socks, and frilled unmentionables fluttering in a damp and distended condition above the laurel hedge. Poor Mrs. Wiggins died there, and after that the house remained unlet for a long time. It had got a bad name; and when at last a quiet couple took it for a year, not a soul in the vicinity called on or took any notice of them; and they departed at the end of their time without having seen any more of their neighbours than a general view of bonnets and back-hair in church, and an even vaguer one of the tradesmen who called for orders at the back door. Then, when they were gone, and had shaken the dust of the inhospitable village off their feet, dirt and darkness again reigned in the empty rooms at Hillbrow, and remained there till, one fine day about a twelvemonth later, Mrs. Dysart came to look at them, and a week afterwards returned with the rest of her household and took possession of the place.

Nothing could have been quieter than their advent. It was some little while indeed before people recognised that the big board with "To Let" on it, so long peering over the laurel hedge, had been deposed from its position; and even then the simple fact of a widow with two little girls coming to live in a house with a bad name, and giving no hostages for respectability in the shape of carriage or men-servants, was not of sufficient promise to warrant the new tenant's eligibility. Most people when they come to reside in a country place know, or are known to, someone in that place before. Women, in especial, have seldom courage enough to settle down in a new spot where they are certain of finding none but strangers; but no single individual in Chadleigh End knew anything at all about Mrs. Dysart before her arrival, or could remember ever having heard anything about her even after that event. She might be the widow of a dancing-master or a dog-doctor. She might not be a widow at all—or a wife! All sorts of damnable possibilities connected themselves naturally in the feminine mind with the advent of a solitary woman wearing deep mourning, who kept herself so closely indoors that she was not even to be seen in church, or taking an airing with her daughters along the pretty lanes about

her house. Anyhow it was safer to wait awhile and endeavour to find out something about her antecedents and previous history before risking the showing of any kindness to her; and so it might have come to pass that Mrs. Dysart would have been as completely ostracised as her innocent predecessors, but that one day a little event happened which brought her into sudden notice.

One frosty afternoon in January a red-faced old gentleman in a mail-phaeton, with a groom behind him, drove into Chadleigh End, and drew up at the Cock and Bottle to ask the way to Hillbrow, Mrs. Dysart's house. The groom jumped down to make the enquiry, and then sprang into his place again, after which the mail-phaeton dashed on and nothing more was seen of it or its occupants till they all passed through and out of the village again a couple of hours later. Brief, however, as had been their stay, and simple the query and answer, something had been seen and uttered of such magical potency as has before now served to cover shame and conceal disgrace; nay, even to condone offences of yet darker dye than the convivial propensities of the departed Smith, or the plebeian clothes-line dangling above the Wigginses' garden fence. There was an earl's coronet painted on the mail-phaeton; and in addressing its owner the groom had said—and said twice over and quite distinctly, “My lord!”

After this, though Mrs. Dysart's moral character still remained hovering over the pit of some dark and condemnable probability (for who could tell what her connection with the venerable nobleman might be?), her social status received an immediate elevation. In place of being simply ignored, she became worthy to be talked about, commented on, and wondered over; and when a few days later it was reported that the carriage from Dilworth Hall, a fine old place about six miles off, had been seen leaving Hillbrow with Lady Ashleigh, and her sister-in-law, the wife of the rector of Dilworth—stately dames both, whose bow was an object of envy and delight—seated in it, and nodding farewell to the two little fair-haired Dysart girls, the whole tide of public opinion changed on the moment. Mrs. Dysart became a person to be cultivated and sought after, and soon showers of cards were left at the long-shunned door by finely-dressed ladies in stylish phaetons and victorias: and people might be heard

talking in dulcet tones of “Our new neighbour: such a sweet woman: niece to Lord Dysart, you know;” and deploring her delicate health and recent widowhood as reasons for the lady in question never being met with at their houses.

For, if society chose to extend a welcoming hand to Mrs. Dysart, she extended none in return. Few of those who called on her got beyond the door; and, of those who did, still fewer had their calls returned.

“I am such a poor creature at walking, I must ask you to excuse my calling on you,” she would say to one friendly visitor; and to another, “I have no governess for my daughters, so I feel bound to devote myself to them instead of society. I never leave them.” And indeed it was true, she very seldom did; and, in their early youth at all events, spent her time in superintending their education, seeing to the well-being and beautifying of her house and garden, or lying on a low couch in the drawing-room, gazing out at the view, and dreaming somewhat sad day-dreams, to judge from the expression of her face, until either the voices or the sudden appearance of her two pretty bright-eyed children drove the shadows from her brow, and banished the memories which brought them there.

But despite its churlish hedge and darkened frontage, Hillbrow was by no means a gloomy house. It stood on a hill, as the name suggested, and from the French windows of the drawing-room the garden sloped downwards in a succession of bright flower-beds and terraced walks, from which you had a wide view of green meadows studded with trees, almost like a gentleman's park, and stretching away to the edge of Chadleigh Heath—a long, broken, gorse-clad expanse of country, rising gradually into a ridge crowned by dark oak-woods.

Nothing very particular perhaps in the way of a view; no water and no mountains; but pleasant enough in summer, when the meadows were like green velvet, dotted over with little white woolly sheep, or mild-eyed cattle flecking their flat brown sides as they browsed under the shade of the big horse-chestnut trees, and the inmates of Hillbrow sat out of doors, or in the pretty verandah, with its light supporting pillars wreathed with purple clematis and climbing yellow roses. Pleasant even in winter, when fields and common were a waste of snow, and the bare brown trees stood out in dark relief against a frosty blue sky; or when the moon, rising behind

the fretted boughs, cast the shadow of their tracery black and sharp upon the white expanse beneath.

It was so open, too, for from this side of the house there was not another building in sight, look where you would, and this circumstance was particularly pleasing to Mrs. Dysart, whose taste for seclusion would have made the view of neighbouring roof-trees and chimneys rather an annoyance than a pleasure to her, as suggesting the proximity of those neighbours whose invitations she declined with an unwavering obstinacy which would have been rude in anyone less consistently graceful and courteous in her manner.

The strange part of the matter was that the advances continued to be made and the invitations to be given, although open-handed hospitality and friendliness were virtues by no means either common or popular in the neighbourhood.

Perhaps it was hardly likely that they should be so. A village less than twenty miles from London, to which people come down every evening from the City, returning to business again in the morning, is so liable to be over-run by persons of all and every class, from retired publicans to pretty horse-breakers "en retraite," and the people established in it are of such heterogeneous and incongruous elements already, that unsuspicious kindness or cordiality become matters so difficult of practice as to be almost obsolete; and of such places Chadleigh End was rather a shining example than an exception. The rich people who had made their money and retired long ago to enjoy themselves in dignified idleness naturally held themselves far above the rich people who were making money still, and whose barouches and waggonettes made a small confusion every morning and evening in the dusty road outside the little station. The rich people who were making money did not care to associate with the poorer ones who were trying to make it, generally opining that the ill-success of the latter was owing to something "shady;" while the very few county-people who had not yet been "crowded out" by cockney villas, or bought out by railway companies, kept themselves jealously aloof from all three of the above-mentioned classes; and the harmless village people made yet another little coterie of their own wherein they lived and moved, ignored by their "towny" neighbours and ignorant of the latter's doings: the very clergy in the place knowing almost as little

of their oddly assorted parishioners as the incumbent of a West End living does of his.

What then was the reason that in a semi-suburban village so constituted Mrs. Dysart should gradually have become, in a quiet and mysterious way, one of the most highly considered people in the neighbourhood?

She had certainly no claim to being so according to the prevailing code of the place; and she made none. She was not rich, even the little improvements at Hill-brow being only made by slow degrees and at the smallest cost consistent with thoroughness. She never entertained, and declined all gaieties. Mr. Dysart, as was soon ascertained, had held no higher position in the world than a consulship in some unimportant Continental town; and as for Lord Dysart, if that venerable peer really were her husband's uncle, that first visit which he paid to his niece-in-law was also his last. Neither were his high-stepping bays or coroneted phaeton ever again seen in the village of Chadleigh End.

What did make the widow and her daughters so much sought after?

In very truth she herself did not know, and (unfeminine as it may seem) regarded with more impatience than gratitude the courtesies and attentions which were lavished upon her.

"You are very kind: but I do not give dinner-parties myself, and therefore I never go to them," she said to Mrs. de Boonyen, who was quite one of the biggest people in the place, when that female potentate drove over herself to invite her to dinner; and Mrs. de Boonyen could hardly believe her ears. The De Boonyens had a "place" with I don't know how many acres of land attached to it. Their show grape-houses and monster pines, their army of gardeners and regiment of cooks, were inflicted on you ad nauseam before and after every one of the gorgeous entertainments at which they were wont to feed their wealthy neighbours. Young De Boonyen was at Cambridge and kept hunters. His sisters had their dresses from Worth, and were only permitted to drive about in state in a large family barouche, their tow-coloured hair and little flat plebeian faces hardly visible above the heap of costly rugs piled about them. The De Boonyen footmen were taller, their livery more gorgeous, and the crest on their carriage panels larger than those of any other family in the country; and though it is true that evilly-disposed

That boy suffered somewhat severely at Eton on the occasion of his once boasting of his knightly ancestor ; and the panels of Albert Edward's " oak " at Trinity were found one morning emblazoned with a coat of arms representing a negro's foot, sable, bearing an enormous bunion, gules, and surmounted by a bottle of embrocation rampant ; the latter being particularly neatly executed. This, however, has nothing to do with my story ; and after all there is no accounting for the low wit of school-boys or undergraduates, or for the origin of such idle rumours as that Mr. de Boonyen himself was given to dropping the letter H in familiar conversation, and had even once or twice so strangely forgotten himself as to have begun to sign his name with the plebeian letters of the house whose balm—and a very excellent one—was a fluid not even to be named within the grounds of Hapsburg Hall.

A slight, a very slight curl came to the corners of Mrs. Dysart's mouth during this speech; but she was patient, and did not even draw herself up as she answered with a modest gentleness which was almost edifying, that Mrs. de Boonyen was most kind. To speak the truth, that difficulty had not occurred to herself, probably (with a slight smile, which the guest took as deprecatory of the difference between their positions), because she had never been in the habit of going into society where her dress could be a matter of any importance. Of course the case was widely different with Mrs. de Boonyen and her friends; yet even with the former's kind indulgence she must still repeat her refusal. And as similar invitations from other people met with a similar answer, it is to be supposed that Mrs. Dysart did prefer to eat her beef and mutton at home, instead of at the houses of her friends; and, indeed, to lead a somewhat recluse life altogether.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER XL. "YEVE ME MY DETH, OR THAT I HAVE A SHAME."

SIR VERNON LAWFORD was sitting alone in his study on the morning after the visit to Goring Abbey, when the door opened suddenly with a sharp jerk, and his younger daughter stood before him. The very manner in which the door opened told him, before he looked up from his desk, that the intruder was Daphne, and not the always welcome Madoline.

He looked at his daughter with cold severe eyes, as at a person who had no right to be there. Ever since she could remember Daphne had feared her father much more than she loved him: but never had he seemed to her so awful a being as he appeared this morning in his own room, surrounded by all the symbols of power—the bronze bust of Cicero looking down at him from the bookcase; his despatch-box open at his side, bristling with pen-knives and paper-knives, and stern official stationery; his ponderous silver inkstand, presented by the Warwickshire yeomanry in acknowledgment of his merits as colonel; his Russia-leather bound dictionaries and directories, and brazen letter-weighing machine—and all the pomp and circumstance of his business life about him.

"Well, Daphne, what do you want?" he asked, looking at her without a ray of sympathetic feeling in his handsome grey eyes.

"If you please, papa," she faltered, blushing deeply under that severe gaze, and peeping up the edge of her lawn-tennis

pinafore in supreme nervousness, "I don't think I'm really finished."

"Finished!" he exclaimed, looking at her as if he thought she was an idiot. "Finished what? You never finish anything, or begin anything either, so far as I can hear, that is worth doing."

"My education, I mean, papa," she said, looking at him with eyes so lovely in hue and expression, so piteous in their timid pleading, that they ought to have touched him. "I know you sent me to Madame Tolmache to be finished, and that she was very expensive; but I'm afraid I came away horribly ignorant; and I begin to feel that a year or two more of schooling would be of very great value to me. I am older now, don't you know, papa; and I should try more earnestly to improve myself. Indeed, indeed, papa, I would work very hard this time," urged Daphne, remorsefully remembering how little she had worked in the past. "I don't care where you send me: to Asnières, or to Germany, or anywhere: so that I could only go on with my education."

"Go on with it at home," answered Sir Vernon contemptuously. "You can read, and write, and spell, I suppose. Yes; I have some of your letters asking me for different things in those pigeon-holes. Any woman who can do as much as that can improve herself. There are books enough on those shelves"—with a glance at his classical and correct collection—"to make you wiser than any woman need be. But as for this freak of wanting to go back to school——"

"It is no freak, papa. It is my most earnest desire. I feel it would be better—for all of us."

She had changed from red to white by

this time, and stood before her father like a culprit, downcast and deadly pale.

"It would not be better for me who would have to pay the bills. I have paid a pretty penny already for your education; and you may suppose how vastly agreeable it is to me to hear your frank confession of ignorance."

"It is best for me to tell the truth, papa. Do not deny me this favour. It is the first great thing I have ever asked of you."

"It is a very foolish thing, and I should be a fool if I humoured your caprice."

She gave a little cry of mental pain.

"How can I convince you that it is no caprice?" she asked despairingly. "I was lying awake all last night thinking about it. I am most thoroughly in earnest, papa."

"You were thoroughly in earnest about your boat; and now you are tired of it. You were intensely anxious to come home; and now you are tired of home. You are a creature of whims and fancies."

"No, I am not tired of my boat," she cried passionately. "I love it with all my heart, and the dear river, and this place, and Madoline—and you—if you would only let me love you. Father," she said in a low tremulous voice, coming quietly to her father's side, and kneeling to him with clasped hands uplifted beseechingly, "there are times in a woman's life when a light shines suddenly upon her showing her where her duty lies. I believe that it is my duty to go back to school, somewhere, in France, or Germany, where I can get on with my education and grow serious and useful, as a woman ought to be. It will be very hard, it will be parting from all I love best in the world, but I feel and know that it is my duty. Let me go, dear father. The outlay of a few pounds cannot affect you."

"Can it not? That shows how little you know of the world. When a man is overweighted as I am in this place, living up to every sixpence of his income, and so fettered that he cannot realise an acre of his estate, every hundred he has to spend is of moment. Your education has been a costly business already; and I distinctly refuse to spend another sixpence on it. If you have not profited by my outlay, so much the worse for you. Get up, child." She was still kneeling by his side, looking at him in blank despair. "This melodramatic fooling is the very last thing to succeed with a man of my stamp. I detest heroics."

"Very well, papa," she answered in a

subdued tone, "strangling her tears, and standing straight and tall before him. "I hope, if you should ever have cause to blame me for anything in the future, you will remember this refusal of to-day."

"I shall blame you if you deserve blame, you may be sure of that," he answered harshly.

"And never praise me when I deserve praise, and never love me, or sympathise with me, or be a father to me—except in name."

"Precisely," he said, looking downward with a gloomy brow. "Except in name. And now be kind enough to leave me. I have a good many letters to write."

Daphne obeyed without a word. When she was in the corridor outside, and had shut the door behind her, she stopped for a few moments leaning against the wall, looking straight before her with a countenance of inexpressible sadness.

"It was the only thing I could do," she murmured with a heavy sigh.

Sir Vernon told his elder daughter that afternoon of Daphne's absurd fancy about going back to school.

"Did you ever hear of such a mass of inconsistency!" he exclaimed angrily. "After worrying you continually with appealing letters to be brought home, she is tired of us all, and wants to be off again, in less than six months."

"It is strange, papa, especially in one who is so thoroughly sweet and loving," said Madoline thoughtfully. "Do you know I'm afraid it must be my fault."

"In what way?"

"I have been urging her to continue her education; and perhaps I may have inadvertently given her the idea that she ought to go back to school."

"That is simply to suppose her an idiot, and unable to comprehend plain English," retorted Sir Vernon testily. "You are always making excuses for her. Hark!" he cried, as a bright girlish laugh came ringing across the summer air. "There she is, playing tennis with Turchill. Would you suppose that two hours ago she was kneeling to me like a tragedy queen, her eyes streaming with tears, entreating to be sent back to school?"

"I'll reason her out of her fancy, dear father. She always gives way to me when I wish it."

"I am glad she has just sense enough to understand your superiority."

"Dearest father, if you would be a little more affectionate to her—in your manner,

I mean—I believe she would be a great deal happier."

Another ringing laugh from Daphne.

"She is monstrously unhappy, is she not?" exclaimed Sir Vernon. "My dear Lina, that girl is a born *comédienne*. She will always be acting tragedy or comedy all her life through. This morning it was tragedy; this afternoon it is comedy. Do not let yourself be duped by her."

"Believe me, papa, you misjudge her!"

"I hope it may be so."

"Daphne, what is this fancy of yours about going back to school?" asked Madoline, when she and her sister were sitting in the conservatory that evening in the sultry summer dusk, while Sir Vernon and the two young men were talking politics over their claret. "I was quite grieved to hear of it, believing, as I did, that you were very happy at home."

"Why, so I am—intensely happy—with you, darling," answered Daphne, taking her sister's hand, and twisting the old-fashioned brilliant hoops, which Lina had inherited from her grandmother, round and round upon the slender finger. "So I am, dear, utterly happy. But happiness is not the be-all and end-all of this life, is it, Lina? The rector is continually telling us that it isn't in those prosy port-winey old sermons of his; but if he were only candid about his feelings he would say that the end and aim of this life was dinner. I don't suppose I was born only to be happy, was I, Lina? We unfortunate mortals are supposed to belong to the silkworm rather than to the butterfly species, and to work out a career of usefulness in the grub and worm stages, before we earn the right to flutter feebly for a little while as elderly moths. Youth from a Christian point of view is meant for work, and self-abnegation, and duty, and all that kind of thing, isn't it Lina?"

"Every stage of life has its obligations, dearest: but your duties are very easy ones," answered Madoline gently. "You have only to be respectful and obedient to your father, and to do as much good as you can to those who need your kindness, and to be grateful to God for the many good gifts He has lavished upon you."

"Yes; I suppose that upon the whole I am a very fortunate young person: although I am a pauper," said Daphne sententiously. "I have youth and the use of all my faculties, and a ridiculously good constitution. I know I can walk knee-deep in wet grass and never

catch cold, and drink quarts of iced water when I am in a fever of heat, and do all manner of things that people consider tantamount to suicide, and be none the worse for my folly. And then I have a fine house to live in; though I have the sense that I am nobody in it; and I have a very aristocratic father—to look at. Yes, Madoline, I have all these things and they are of no account to me: but I have your love, and that is worth them all a hundred times over."

The sisters sat with clasped hands, Madoline touched by the wayward girl's affection. The moon was shining above the deodaras; the last of the nightingales was singing amidst the darkness of the shrubbery.

"Why do you want to go back to school, Daphne?" asked Lina again, coaxingly.

"I don't want to go."

"But this morning you were begging papa to send you back."

"Yes; I had an idea that I ought to improve myself—this morning. But as papa refused to grant my request in a very decisive manner, I have put the notion out of my head. I thought that another year with Madame Tolmache might have improved my French, and reconciled me to the necessity for a subjunctive mood, which I never could see while I was at Asnières; or that a twelvemonth in Germany might have enabled me to distinguish the verbs that require the dative case after them, from the verbs that are satisfied with the accusative, which at present is a thing utterly beyond me. But papa says no, and, as I am much fonder of boating and tennis and billiards than of study, I am not going to find fault with papa's decision."

This was all said so lightly, with so much of the natural recklessness of a high-spirited girl who has never had a secret in her life, that Madoline had not a moment's doubt of her sister's candour. Yet there was a hardness in Daphne's tone to-night that grieved her.

"Who is fond of billiards?" asked Gerald's lazy tones, a little way above them, and looking up they saw him leaning with folded arms upon the broad marble balustrade. "Are you coming up to the drawing-room to give us some music, or are we coming down to the billiard-room to play a match with you?" he enquired.

"Whichever papa likes," answered Madoline.

"Sir Vernon will not play this evening. He has gone to his room to read the

evening papers. I think he has not forgotten Turchill for the series of flukes by which he won that game last night. Edgar and I will have a clear stage and no favour this evening, and we mean to give you two young ladies a tremendous licking."

"You will have an easy victim in me," said Madoline. "I have not played half-a-dozen times since you left home."

"Devotion surpassing Penelope's. And Daphne, I suppose, is still a tyro at the game. We must give you seventy-five out of a hundred."

"You are vastly condescending," exclaimed Daphne, drawing herself up. "You will give me nothing! I don't care how ignominiously I am beaten; but I will not be treated like a baby."

"Und etwas schnippisch doch zugleich," quoted Mr. Goring, smiling to himself in the darkness.

And now Edgar Turchill came out of the drawing-room, and the two young men went down the shallow flight of steps to the conservatory, where Madoline and her sister were still seated in their wicker-work chairs in front of the open door, through which the moonlit garden looked so fair a scene of silent peace.

"Daphne is quite right to reject your humiliating concessions," said Edgar. "She and I will play against you and Madoline, and beat you."

"Easily done, my worthy Saxon," answered Gerald, who was apt to make light of his friend's ancient lineage, in a good-natured easy-going way. "I have never given more than a fraction of my mind to billiards."

"Then you must be a deuced bad player," said Edgar bluntly.

They all went down into the billiard-room, where Daphne's eyes sparkled with unaccustomed fire in the lamplight, as if the mere notion of the coming contest had fevered her excitable brain. Turchill, who was thoroughly earnest in his amusements, took off his coat with the air of a man who means business. Gerald Goring slipped out of his, as if he were going to lie down for an after-dinner nap on one of the broad morocco-covered divans.

And now began the fight. Gerald and Madoline were obviously nowhere, from the very beginning. Daphne had a firmness of wrist, a hawklike keenness of eye, an audacity of purpose that accomplished miracles. The more difficult the position the better her stroke. Her boldness con-

quered where a more cautious player must have failed. She sent her adversaries' ball rattling into the pockets with a dash that even stimulated Gerald Goring to applaud his antagonist. And while she swelled the score by the most startling strokes, Edgar crept quietly after her with his judicious and careful play—doing wonderful things with his arms behind his back.

"I throw up the sponge," cried Gerald, after struggling feebly against his fate. "Lina, dearest, forgive me for my candour, but you are playing almost as wretchedly as I. We are both out of it. You two young gladiators had better finish the game by playing against each other up to a hundred, while Lina and I look on and applaud you. I like to see youth energetic, even if its energies are misdirected."

He seated himself languidly on the divan which commanded the best view of the table. Lina sat by his side, her white hands moving with an almost rhythmical regularity, as she knitted a soft woollen comforter for one of her numerous pensioners.

"My busy Penelope, don't you think you might rest from your labours now that Ulysses is safe at home, and the suitors are all put to flight?" asked Gerald, looking admiringly at the industrious hands. "You have no idea how horribly idle you make me feel."

"I think idleness is the privilege of your sex, Gerald; but it would be the penalty of ours. I am wretched without some kind of work."

"Another case of misdirected energy," sighed Gerald, throwing himself lazily back against the India-matting dado, and clasping his hands above his head, as he watched the antagonists.

Daphne was playing as if her life depended on her victory. Her slim figure was braced like a young athlete's, every muscle of the round white arm defined under her muslin sleeve—the bare supple wrist and delicate hand looking as strong as steel. The dark grey eyes looked almost black. She moved round the table with the swift lightness of some wild thing of the woods—graceful, shy, untameable, half-savage, yet wholly beautiful.

Edgar Turchill went on all the while in his business-like way, playing with either hand, and behaving just as coolly as if he had been playing against Sir Vernon. Yet every now and then, when it was Daphne's turn to play, he fell into a

dreamy contemplative mood, and stood on one side watching her as if she were something too wonderful to be quite human.

"There's a stroke!" he cried, as she left him tight under the cushion, with nothing to play for. "I taught her. Oughtn't I to be proud of such a pupil?"

"You taught me sculling, and lawn-tennis, and billiards," said Daphne, considering what she should do next. "All I have ever learnt worth knowing."

"Daphne!" murmured Madoline, looking up reproachfully from her ivory needles.

"I say it advisedly," argued Daphne, making another score. "Edgar, I am not at all sure you are marking honestly. Mr. Goring would mark for us if he were not too lazy."

"Not too lazy," murmured Gerald languidly; "but too delightfully occupied in watching you. I would not spoil my pleasure by mixing it with business for the world."

"What is the use of book-learning?" continued Daphne, going on with her argument. "I maintain that Edgar has taught me all I know worth knowing, for he has taught me how to be happy. I adore the river; I doat upon billiards; and next best after billiards I like lawn-tennis. Do you suppose I shall ever be happier for having learnt French grammar or the rule of three?"

"Daphne, you are the most inconsistent person I ever met with," said Madoline, almost angry. "Only this morning you wanted to go back to school to finish your education."

"Did she?" asked Gerald, suddenly attentive.

"That was all nonsense," exclaimed Daphne, colouring violently.

Mr. Turchill laughed heartily at the idea.

"Go back to school!" he exclaimed. "What, after having tasted liberty, and learnt to shoot Stratford Bridge, and to beat her master at billiards—for that last cannon makes the hundred, Daphne! Back to school, indeed! What a little humbug you must be to talk of such a thing."

"Yes," answered Daphne coolly, as she put away her cue, and came quietly round to her sister's side; "I am a little bit of a humbug. I think I try to humbug myself sometimes. I persuaded myself this morning that I really thirsted for knowledge, but my father contrived to quench

that righteous thirst with a very big dose of cold water—so henceforth I renounce all attempts to improve myself."

The clock on the chimney-piece struck the half-hour after ten.

"I ordered my dog-cart for ten," said Gerald; "I hope we have not transgressed, Lina, by staying so late?"

"I'm not going till eleven, unless Miss Lawford sends me away," said Turchill. "Eleven is the mystic hour at which Sir Vernon usually tells me to go about my business. I know the ways and manners of the house better than a wretched wanderer like you, whose last idea of time is derived from some wretched old Dalecarlian town clock."

"We had better go back to the drawing-room," suggested Madoline. "Papa has finished his letters by this time, I dare say."

"Then good-night everybody," said Daphne. "I'm going into the garden to cool myself after that fearful struggle, and then to bed."

She ran off through the conservatory while Gerald was opening the opposite door for Madoline to go up to the drawing-room by the indoor staircase.

Daphne stopped to draw breath on the moonlit terrace.

"How ridiculously I have been gabbling," she said to herself, with her hands clasping her burning forehead. "Why can't I hold my tongue? I am detestable to myself and everybody."

"Daphne," said someone close at her side in a tone of friendliest concern, "I'm afraid you're really tired."

It was Edgar Turchill, who had followed her through the conservatory.

"Tired! Not in the least degree. I would play against you again to-night—and beat you—if it were not too late."

"But I am sure you are tired; there is a something in your voice—strained, unnatural. Have you been vexed to-day? My poor little Daphne," he went on tenderly, taking her hand, "something has gone wrong with you, I am sure. Has your aunt been lecturing?"

"No. My father was unkind to me this morning, and I was weak enough to take his unkindness to heart, which I ought not to have done, being so well broken in to it."

"And did you really and truly wish to go back to school?"

"I really and truly felt that I was an ignoramus, and that I had better go on

with my education while I was young enough to learn."

"Daphne, if you had all the knowledge of all the girls in Girtton screwed into that one little golden head you wouldn't be one whit more charming than you are now."

"I daresay the effect would be the other way; but I might be a great deal more useful. I might teach in a poor school, or nurse the sick, or do something in some way to help my fellow-creatures. But sculling, and billiard-playing, and lawn-tennis— isn't it a horribly empty life?"

"If there were not birds and butterflies, and many bright useless things, this world wouldn't be half so beautiful as it is, Daphne."

"Oh, now you are dropping into poetry, like Mr. Wegg, and I must go to bed," exclaimed Daphne, with good-humoured petulance, cheered by his kindness. "Good-night, Edgar. You are always good to me. I shall always like you," she said gently.

"Always like me. Yes, I hope so, Daphne. And do you still think that you would rather have had me than Gerald Goring for your brother?"

"Ten thousand times."

"Yet he is a thoroughly amiable fellow, kind to every one, generous to a fault."

"A man with a million of money can't be generous," answered Daphne; "he can never give away anything that he wants for himself. Generosity means self-sacrifice, doesn't it? It was generous of you to leave Hawkseyard at six in the morning in order to teach me to scull."

"I would do a great deal more than that to please you, and count it no sacrifice," said Edgar gravely.

"I am sure you would," answered Daphne, with easy frankness.

She was so thoroughly convinced that he would never leave off caring for Madoline, and would go down to his grave fondly faithful to his first misplaced affection, that no word or tone or look of his, however significant, ever hinted to her of any other feeling on his part than an honest brotherly regard for herself.

"Tell me what you think of Goring, now you have had time to form an opinion about him."

"I think that he is devoted to Lina, and that is all I want to know about him," answered Daphne decisively.

"And do you think him worthy of her?"

"Oh, that is a wide question. There

was never a man living, except King Arthur, whom I should think absolutely worthy of my sister Madoline; but as he is lying in Glastonbury Abbey, I think Mr. Goring will do as well as anyone else. I hope Lina will govern him, for his own sake as well as hers."

"You think him weak, then?"

"I think him self-indulgent, and a self-indulgent man is always a weak man, isn't he? Look at Gladstone now, a man of surpassing energy, of illimitable industry, a man who will eat a snack of cold beef and drink a glass of water for his luncheon, at his desk, in the midst of his work, anyhow. Mr. Lampton, the new member, who went up to see him, gave us a sketch of him in his study, so thoroughly homely and unaffected."

"Daphne, I thought you were a hardened little Tory!"

"So I am; but I can admire the individual though I may detest his politics. That is the kind of man I should like Lina to marry: a man without a selfish thought, a man made of iron."

"Don't you think a wife might hurt herself now and then against the rough edges of the iron?—those unselfish men are apt to demand a good deal of self-sacrifice from others."

"And you think Lina was meant to sit in a drawing-room all her life, among hot-house flowers? Well, I believe she will be very happy at Goring Abbey. She likes a quiet domestic life, and to live among the people she loves. And Mr. Goring's selfishness will hardly trouble her. She has had such splendid training with papa."

"Daphne, do you think it is quite right to speak of your father in that way?" asked Edgar reproachfully.

He was wounded by her flippant tone, hurt by every evidence of faultiness in one whom he hoped the future would develop into perfect woman and perfect wife.

"Would you like me to be a hypocrite?"

"No, Daphne. But if you can't speak of Sir Vernon as he ought to be spoken of, don't you think it would be better to say nothing at all?"

"For the future I shall be dumb, in deference to Mr. Turchill—and the proprieties. But it was nice to have one friend in the world with whom I could be thoroughly confidential," she added coaxingly.

"Pray be confidential with me."

"I can't, if you once begin to lecture. I

have a horror of people who talk to me for my own good. That is Aunt Rhoda's line. She is never tired of preaching to me for my good, and I never feel so utterly bad as I do after one of her preachments. And now I really must say good-night. Don't forget that you are engaged to dine at the Rectory to-morrow."

"Are not you and Lina going?"

"Yes, and Mr. Goring. It is to be a regular family gathering. Papa is asked, but I cherish a faint hope that he may not—I beg your pardon," exclaimed Daphne, making him a ceremonious curtsy. "My honoured parent has been invited, and wherever he is his children must be happy. Is that the kind of thing you like?" she asked, tripping away to the little half-glass door at the other end of the terrace.

Edgar ran after her, to open the door for her: but she was fleet as Atalanta, and there was nobody to distract her with golden apples. She shut the door and drew the bolt, just as Edgar reached it, and nodded a smiling good-night to him through the glass. He stopped to see the white frock vanish from the lamp-lit lobby, and then turned away to light a cigarette and take a solitary turn on the terrace, before going back to the drawing-room to make his adieux.

It was a spot where a man might love to linger on such a night as this. The winding river, showing in fitful glimpses between its shadowy willows; the distant woods; the dim lights of the little quiet town; the tall spire rising above the trees; made up a landscape dearer to Edgar Turchill's honest English heart than all the blue mountains and vine-clad valleys of the sunny South. He was a son of the soil, with all his desires, and prejudices, and affections rooted in the land on which he had been born. "How sweet—how completely loveable she is," he said to himself, meditating over that final cigarette, "and how thoroughly she trusts me. Her mind is as clear as a rivulet through which one can count every pebble and every grain of golden sand."

A TRAVELLER'S TALES.

A CLOCK-ORNAMENT.

SHREWD you are, reader, I doubt not—experienced, I trust—critical, I hope; but men famous for these advantages have been puzzled by my clock-ornament. It has passed round a circle of guests to whom few curiosities are unknown by sight, and

not one has given it a name with confidence. They say, at a glance, "Oh, a reptile's paw, carved in wood!" but when I assure them that it is at least a fac-simile, they can identify neither wood nor reptile. You, reader, I have no wish to mystify. The thing is the forearm of a mummied crocodile, buried three thousand years ago or more, and dug up by these sacrilegious hands in the saurian mausoleum at Maäbdeh. There is a head belonging to it in some cupboard of the bungalow; another larger head was sacrificed to scientific curiosity, and burnt, some years ago. A baby's foot, which I picked up in the same caves, has vanished, I know not how. The limb of that little innocent caused much distress to an amiable clergyman of my acquaintance. A pretty fragment of humanity it was, with little toes all perfect, which curled down just like your baby's, ma'am, or mine. The worthy parson viewed this relic of antiquity with mingled horror and bewilderment. "Pray bury the poor thing!" he said. But we could not find a spot suitable. He would not give it room in the churchyard, nor would let me plant it in a cabbage-bed. So, pending a decision, the "poor thing" lay about till it got lost.

It is many years, alas! since I published an account of the adventure which gave me possession of these and other curiosities. Many travellers, no doubt, have explored the pits of Maäbdeh since my day, though I have not chanced to meet one. It may very well be that fanciful memory exaggerates the danger we went through, the perils and pains of the excursion. As the incidents dwell now in my mind, it seems that in obtaining my clock-ornament I ran the gravest risk yet encountered in a life not uneventful. But it is no old story I would tell, though the temptation in this case is strong. I think, of all my adventures, that, perhaps the earliest, rests most vividly in my mind. But the tale was told, well or ill, nearly fifteen years ago. It shall not be repeated.

What like is my trophy? Just like the forepaw of a crocodile, of course—each wrinkle, scale, and toe complete—carved with patience and dexterity inimitable in a solid block of oak. The colour is a rich but varied brown; it has a natural polish beyond all art to surpass; and, the broken humerus encircled by a brazen plate, mounted in ebony, it forms an ornament very quaintly handsome. None of the odd things scattered about my room have an interest comparable with this, saving

the tripod which I dug from an ancient tomb in Chontales. Though collected in scenes unlike our own, there is no mystery about them. The savage world is lower; its arts, even though more perfect, its luxury, though more superb, serve an inferior purpose. But this reptile lived in an era not less civilised than ours, when the human mind reached such heights of pure intelligence as never since have been outclimbed, when human hands accomplished work which we could scarcely rival with all the elements at our command. In this troubled, restless age we may admire the calm which reigned in Egypt; the orderly pursuit of what is grandest for an immortal creature; the submission of all to the law; the unquestioning faith in a deity supreme and beneficent. But by this society, refined, artistic, learned, philosophical, the nursing mother of all wisdom, my crocodile was worshipped! Here is delightful food for speculation, as I smoke before the fire, and watch the hands of my clock go round until the short hours approach the long. In some such reverie I must have dreamed.

Upon the other side the Nile, facing the spot where now stands that wilderness of sheds and sties called Manfaloot, a white-walled city rose three thousand years ago. Situated on the edge of Lower Egypt, it was a military post of special consequence, and the stately streets clanged all day with trumpet-calls, rattling of chariots, jangle of horse, and tramp of infantry. But its distinction was not altogether military. Maulhoût held the grand seat of crocodile worship. Other cities might adore the cat, the wolf, the Anubis ape, or the familiar duck; but these false divinities were scorned at Maulhoût. Its inhabitants knew that salvation proceeds only from the crocodile; to this precious gospel they testified with the zeal of martyrs and the ruthlessness of iconoclasts. In the savage wars described by Strabo, betwixt the saurian devotees of Ombos and the dog-worshippers of Tentyra, Maulhoût always furnished a contingent to its co-religionists. Some of the leading citizens took part in that cannibal feast of victory which shocked the ancient world. They gave the blessed reptiles spacious and convenient quarters in a handsome tank communicating with the river. Some roved almost daily; others paid long visits, and then withdrew for months at a time; others gorged, and slept, floated listlessly, and basked the whole year round in their watery preserve. A causeway raised on arches led from the bank to a small island,

where stood the keeper's hut. This man was a Tentyrite, for the people of Maulhoût held their divinities in reverential awe—to put the thing plainly, lived in a deadly dread of them. Not one would have dwelt where the godless inhabitant of Tentyra was quite at ease. Historians have told us how the hatred and contempt of this latter people for the crocodile were utilised in the amphitheatre for Rome's amusement. The keeper of the sacred animals at Maulhoût was always one of this blood: a being regarded with awe, repugnance, and fanatical hate—but indispensable. For battles occurred daily in the tank, when some colossal habitué took offence at the visit of a stranger. Then, whilst the water surged and lapped against the granite sides; whilst its muddy depths were stirred with tails gyrating, and huge jaws snapped upon the surface; then the townsmen's hearts stood still to watch the proceedings of this Paynim. With an iron-pointed staff between his teeth, he sprang into the mêlée, returning not until the authors of the quarrel were expelled. They bellowed, they clashed their teeth, they sank and doubled; but the Tentyrite pursued them with sharp digs and thrusts, in the depths as on the surface, until at length they fled through the portal, a great wave parting from their snouts.

When Nepthoth was not there to quell disturbances, his little daughter worthily replaced him. She passed half her day in the tank, and its loathsome denizens knew her. She played tricks with the most savage: climbed on their backs as they floated, or, rising beneath them, knocked the wind from their smooth bellies with her head. Such ugly playmates were all that Athor had. The girls of Maulhoût ran away at her approach, if they did not throw brick-ends—there are no pebbles in Egypt. The only Tentyrites in the city were soldiers of that province, and they were forbidden to approach the tank; for it had happened several times that their sectarian hatred of the crocodile led them to massacre divinities of special holiness. Athor had a dreary childhood, and as she grew up there were none to see how her limbs rounded into exquisite proportion, and her sweet eyes gained the conscious look of womanhood. Her father was bound to the reptiles for life, and she had no prospect better than a vague thought of succeeding him. Day by day the girl sat beneath the straggling and leafless

boughs which overhung the water. The hideous flock of which her parent was the shepherd gently floated past asleep, as the circling current bore them. Their scaly sides ground one against another with a low harsh noise. One sank without a ripple, or rose as softly. So close they passed that she saw the quiver of the membrane on their glassy eyes. The Nile beyond was creased with splash of swallows' wings, but no bird dipped in that dismal pool. The green tayr-allahs circled overhead, like flying jewels; but none came near. From time to time a fruit of the holy palm-tree dropped with a splash, and the gorged brutes opened one eye lazily. But then a group of citizens came up the road, and all the tank boiled with life. For a squeal of pigs sounded near and nearer, victims offered to the gods. One by one they were dragged struggling to the brink, and pushed across. Then for an instant the water seethed, pigs screamed, men shouted and laughed. But the turmoil ended soon. Those deities which had secured a piece of flesh withdrew to hide it in the mud; others swam round, hungry and excited, for awhile, then closed their eyes, and floated sleepily.

So passed the time, day by day, for years. But once, as Athor sat thus listless, a soldier strolled up the road, and stood to watch the scene. He wore the uniform of that famous phalanx which routed the veterans of Cyrus, and won the praise of Xenophon. It was largely recruited amongst the Tentyrites, and Athor knew of course that all the detachment quartered in Maulhoût belonged to that tribe. The expression of the soldier's face, indeed, would have betrayed him. He regarded the crocodiles with scorn and loathing, whilst the huge dog beside him bayed so angrily that the brutes looked up and splashed. Athor ran in haste to warn her countryman that it was death for such as he to approach the spot. A sturdy fellow was the Tentyrite, very dark, very martial, seeming full of spirit and determination. He watched the girl's coming with a smile, which did not vanish at her shy entreaties.

"I am not afraid of crocodiles," he said, "nor of those who worship them; but if you ask me to go, I obey. You could not respect your gods if you saw the little boys of my country chasing them, the brutes!"

"I am a Tentyrite too," she answered. "But do not stay to argue! They will throw you into the tank!"

"You! One of our girls tending those

filthy creatures! But I go. Where shall we meet again?"

Athor cried, not meaning to keep the promise: "At the temple yonder, when the moon rises!"

"Good! If you do not come, I shall return to fetch you." And he retired, with slow careless steps.

I suppose that the discipline of the Egyptian army must have been indulgent, for Macedo appears to have left his quarters when he liked. At the rising of the moon Athor did not show, and he walked towards the forbidden place. For an hour the girl had been watching, resolved not to keep her word unless the rash youth should make it necessary. She met him half-way, breathless with running; but whether pleased or vexed I cannot tell. In the temple grove they talked the usual nonsense, whilst the big dog kept guard. Very innocent and very silly was their conversation, but they parted with a mutual feeling that angels and sages could not have discoursed more pleasantly. Other interviews followed, and after awhile Macedo pleaded a guileless love, which Athor accepted with childish satisfaction. Nothing could come of it, but they asked nothing, and so cheated Nemesis. During the young man's term of service they could not wed, but in those martial times, if fortune aided the soldier, one campaign might give him rank and wealth. The race from which Macedo sprang was used to take the lead in battle, as are their descendants to this day. Many a fellow-townsmen with no better interest than he, furnished only with high courage, quick brain, firm resolve, and endurance, was governor of a kingdom, or general of armies. Macedo prayed for war, and Athor innocently echoed him. She was no such sentimental creature as the young ladies of our time, or even as the virgins of Maulhoût. In her philosophy, war was man's natural occupation; not to grow enthusiastic over, but to regard as we do a profession—the means of obtaining what human beings ask: riches, position, and the rest. For herself Athor had no ambitious dreams. Her wishes would have been satisfied with Macedo and a cottage, but war alone could grant her this, and she accepted the ruling of the universe without demur.

In process of time the opportunity arrived. The Egyptian monarch prepared an invasion of Syria, and in the draft summoned from the garrison of Maulhoût the Tentyrites were included. Half-a-million

soldiers gathered in the neighbourhood of Heliopolis, whence the army was to march, under command of the king in person. No troops of the ancient world were equipped like the Egyptian. Those of Persia were more fiery, those of Assyria more stubborn, those of Rome more solid; but in all that pertains to supply and organisation the forces of Egypt had no rival. This was likely to be a campaign of several seasons, for Egypt had made up her mind to crush the adversary, and Syria was a hard nut, often mouthed. The mass of soldiery were not enthusiastic, but prepared to do their duty. Martial tribes there were among them, however, who hailed the campaign with joy, and none more fervently than the Tentyrites. I have endeavoured to explain the unromantic fact that Athor and Macedo bade adieu without those railings and demonstrations against fate, which are becoming nowadays upon occasions of the sort. If her lover fell, the girl might die of grief, but the risk was inseparable from her scheme of human affairs. If he returned, he would bring the wherewithal for marriage and happiness; or, if not, it could only be said that they had drawn an evil card in the game of life. But an Egyptian, whether he worshipped cats or crocodiles, or what not, had a perfect trust in divine benevolence; and thus Athor rested. Perhaps, if our maidens had faith as firm, they would be less heart-broken in a similar case.

Few mementos had these young people to exchange. The girl wove a necklace of her long curly hair, and hung upon Macedo's breast a porcelain bottle. It came from unknown realms beyond the Eastern desert, and a zealous millionaire had offered it at the interment of a crocodile particularly holy, aged, and vicious. Athor, when too young to know the danger, stole and treasured it. The soldier had no such pretty keepsake for his mistress. His sword was his only ornament. A dog he had, however, of the breed still cherished jealously at Erment, Bairat, and the neighbourhood. Enormous animals they are, with rough black hair rising to a mane betwixt the shoulders, and red eyes. Macedo left his noble friend in Athor's charge when they bade farewell in the shadowy morning twilight on the river side. Nöt a cloud hung in the sky glowing palely overhead. The tufted heads of papyrus softly bowed, as the swift brown water gurgled by their roots. Flocks of

sand-grouse rustled, wild geese clanged high in air. Ziczacs, standing in the mud, gave forth their grating call. Sand-pipers prettily twittered; grey Nile-birds sped from point to point. And then, whilst Athor sobbed upon her lover's breast, the trumpet-call rang out. Macedo caught his heavy shield and ran, with gay words uttered in a broken voice. She followed slowly. Too many tears were flowing on that day for hers to be remarked. All the city was deserted, but the dawn spreading showed the long line of walls and towers thronged with a multitude. Under the river front a serried column of infantry moved towards the fleet of transports lying at the quay. These, gay with flags, bustling with sailors, dropped from their moorings down the stream as they received their complement. Upon the other side the town, a thousand chariots and five thousand horsemen stood drawn up, waiting the signal. It came as the first sunbeam shot above the mountain tops, quivered for an instant in the air, and struck the highest tower with a shaft of gold. Then the solid mass dissolved, slowly and orderly unwinding. First went the cavalry, with tufted lances, waving scarves, and glittering accoutrements. The chariots followed, rumbling and clashing, four abreast. Behind them marched an escort of picked infantry belonging to that phalanx which was the pride and hope of Egypt. Macedo was there, but Athor looked in vain along each row of swarthy foreheads and deep-shadowed, gleaming eyes; the lower face and all the figure were hid by the enormous shield which distinguished these favourite warriors. Short time there was for search. The trampling horses raised a cloud of dust, which spread in the light morning breeze, and drew, as it were, a veil across the picture. Behind it cow-horns bellowed hollow, trumpets rang, officers swore. A helmet sparkled on the verge; an orderly passed out and galloped up or down. But the army marched in a cloud as dense as that enwrapping its own future, and disappeared from view. Athor went home.

It was an occupation troublesome and sad, but not wholly unpleasant, teaching her dog to let the crocodiles alone. A real Tentyrite was the animal, for courage and for detestation of his hereditary foe, but ill-matched to cope with them. The causeway had a parapet, built to keep the reptiles from intruding, but suffered lately to fall in ruin. Athor repaired it carefully,

bringing mud from the river, and bricks from the shattered walls around. Till this was completed she did not venture to let her dog run loose, but meanwhile she accustomed him to sit on the embankment and see the hated brutes float by. He learned to watch them with no demonstration more angry than a growl, and then, the parapet rebuilt, she gave him freedom. The zealots of Maulhoût did not behold this addition to their keeper's family with unconcern. They proved the indecorum, not to say the blasphemy, of bringing a dog, and that a Tentyra dog, into the presence of deities notoriously hostile to his kind. But old Nephoth loved the daughter to whom he seldom spoke, and this favourite of hers was a sort of countryman. He had money, or money's worth in trinkets and valuable offerings, obtained like the Chinese bottle which Athor gave Macedo. If the dog were expelled or injured, he would go; and Maulhoût trembled at the threat. So it remained. Athor had not hitherto disliked the crocodiles, which knew her, and came to her whistle. But now she hated them, and when nobody could see she threw hard things at their shining eyes. If their optic nerves escaped, their divine feelings must have been hurt.

One evening, when the army had been gone some months, Athor took her customary stroll towards the grove where she first met her lover. The dog did not follow, and at the far end of the causeway she turned to whistle for him. Her heart stood still with fear. A huge claw gripped the parapet, and dragged it crumbling down with hooks of steel. While she looked the wall gave way, and a monstrous scaly snout was thrust above the gap. The other claw appeared, and then, rolling and heaving, the vast shoulders arched themselves to clamber out. Athor recognised the creature by a gold ring in its nostril. It had long been absent from the tank, expelled by Nephoth for incurable malignity. She flew to drive it back. But in that instant the dog came galloping along the causeway, now blocked by a crouching monster whose wet scales gleamed redly in the sun, whose death-like eyes peered cruelly up the path. Athor knew her favourite was doomed. Fleet as a stag she ran to save him, but the loving hound was quicker. At sight of that foul reptile he stopped short, then sprang upon him. The tail curled in a resistless sweep; the long jaws snapped

like scissors; and all was over. Bearing his prey, which still quivered, the crocodile turned softly, and launched himself into the pool. Athor thought of nothing but revenge. She drew her knife, plunged in, and buried it behind the creature's shoulder. No time there was to withdraw the blade. Turning over and over, one claw outspread in agony above the surface, the crocodile went rolling down the current. His tail threw fountains into the air, his hooked teeth clashed. Athor climbed out, frightened now, but not regretful. Were she bound and waiting to be thrown into the tank, she would not be penitent. And that fate certainly would befall her could she not escape. Nephoth was slow of comprehension, but he loved his girl, and he saw her fright. Seizing his treasure he hurried with her down the causeway; their feet were wetted with the blood of that faithful hound. Whilst they ran, themselves unnoticed, they heard citizens arriving with their noisy victims. A fishing-boat lay in the river, and the two sprang in, paddling like fugitives whom a hideous death pursues. Upon the third day they reached Tentyra, but the avengers were not long after them. The crocodile's body had lodged in stake-nets which half filled the river just below, and Athor's name was engraved upon the handle of her knife. Maulhoût demanded the surrender of the criminal, and Tentyra laughed. The more the deputation raved of sacrilege, the louder swelled that chorus; and at such a time, when the best champions of Ombos were away, Maulhoût did not dare try force. So they gave the martyred crocodile a funeral of extreme magnificence in the caves now called Maâbdeh, and—— his paw is my clock-ornament.

As for Athor, she lived and died as happy as woman can expect to be. Macedo came back, with glory and wealth, to marry her. In after years, when he commanded the phalanx, she mildly disclaimed the present of so many slave-girls after each victorious expedition. But her troubles were not serious, for she knew that Macedo loved her.

THE STAGE JEWEL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

My only excuse was that I was very young, and had never seen any young men save the clodhopping farmers' sons in our village, and aunt, who was considered

the great lady of the place because she lived upon her small means without having to work, did not approve of any association with her rustic neighbours; so that at seventeen years of age I had acquired no other knowledge of life than what had been gained at the circulating library kept by Mrs. Bates at the general shop of the village. Aunt and I had read through Mrs. Bates's stock over and over again, and had got half through the third shelf—there were but seven in all—for about the fifth time, when the wandering company of actors, "selected from the first London theatres," made its appearance in Slowbury. The play to be acted, "by desire," was *Romeo and Juliet*, the part of *Romeo* by Mr. Algernon Mont-eagle, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Aunt was even more anxious to see again what she had beheld in her youth than I was to behold what I had never seen before, and we were amongst the very first arrivals in Farmer Benson's great barn, which had been transformed into what appeared to me a most brilliant theatre, by the help of green baize, a raised platform, and drop-scene.

All was new to me then—the very foot-lights, the four musicians penned in their narrow orchestra of red serge, filled me with expectation. Nor was I disappointed when, on the curtain rising, *Romeo* was discovered leaning pensively against a rock waiting for *Juliet* in the garden scene. All the preamble had been omitted for want of sufficient personages.

To describe the tumult of delight with which I looked and listened would be impossible. The actor was young and handsome, and in my eyes became at once the realisation of every hero of the different romances with which my imagination had been fed through Mrs. Bates's agency. He was *Thaddeus* of Warsaw, and *Abellino* in *The Bravo* of Venice, and *Carlo* in *The Discarded Son*, and *Sebastian* in *The Veiled Protector*, all in one. In short, as I gazed upon his pallid countenance with its hectic bloom, and contemplated his gallant bearing and rich costume, I felt that my hour was come, and that I was destined to become the willing slave of this involuntary tyrant.

I gazed, literally fascinated, upon the graceful movements of *Algernon Mont-eagle*, and listened to the burning words he uttered to his *Juliet*, on whom I durst not look lest her beauty should drive me to despair. The folds of his mantle; the very

droop of the long ostrich-feather in his velvet cap; the slender rapier at his side; the lace ruffles at his wrist—all—all possessed a bewitching power over my fancy. But most of all was my attention riveted to the jewel which held the feather in front of the velvet cap. It was a star-shaped ornament, composed of many-coloured jewels, with a cluster of brilliants in the midst, and it seemed to me one mass of flame, winking and blinking as the light fell upon it, trembling and uncertain from the quivering lamps along the stage—like some fiery eye ever and anon fixed with a blinding stare upon me. "How valuable it must be," thought I, "composed of such splendid diamonds, surrounded by those priceless amethysts and glittering emeralds, with here and there a dazzling ruby!" I could not withdraw my gaze from this talisman, for sure it must be one, thought I, "such a one as I have read of in books." The idea struck me from the very first moment when my eye fell upon it, and has never left me since. A very few weeks had elapsed before I discovered that the ostrich-feather was mangy and moth-eaten—that the cap was of cotton velvet threadbare and rusty; the ruffles, of paper ingeniously cut to imitate the finest Venetian point. Every object was ere long appreciated at its just value, and proved to be fallacious and a snare, while the jewel—although that, too, I found to be composed of coloured glass—has held its power over my destiny to this very day.

It was strange—was it not?—that even while I was fascinated by the glittering of the ornament, staring at it with all my might, unable to turn my glance elsewhere, *Romeo* should, by a sudden startled movement of the head, throwing it back as he gazed upwards at *Juliet's* balcony—for the stage was too small for him to step far away—the cap, overbalanced by the weight of the ostrich feather, should fall to the ground and by the shock cause the jewel to spring, nay, absolutely to leap, as it were, from its place, rebounding over the edge of the stage right into my lap! So great was my excitement at the incident that, instead of returning it immediately, as I should have done, I lost all presence of mind, and clasped the jewel in my hands, held it tight, raised it to my lips, breathed upon it, lifted it to the light, pressed it to my heart, and, with trembling fingers, was actually about to fasten it by the clasp into the bosom of my dress, when I was recalled to myself by my aunt's rude attempt to

snatch it from my hand in obedience to the summons of the man in fustian, who had been sent to fetch it and was leaning over her to take it. But I did not give it back in the natural ladylike manner that might have been expected, but, rising from my seat, I leaned over the edge of the raised platform, where stood Romeo, ostensibly listening to the accents of Juliet from the balcony, but all the while throwing glances full of disquietude and suspicion in the direction in which the jewel had fallen. I held it towards him; he stooped low, and as he took the blazing star our eyes met, his hand touched mine, and while he turned without emotion to reply to Juliet's speech, I sank back in my seat panting, breathless, and, as aunt said in her country way, "as white as any smock."

Let no one ever seek to know the means by which I made my Algernon Monteagle acquainted with the sentiment he had awakened in my bosom; there are none who, loving as I loved then, would not have done the same; there are none who would not blush with humbled pride, as I do now, for having acted as I did. But the tale is soon told; once—twice—three times—often and often, did we meet together at the gate of aunt's cottage-garden; the last time by the light of a brilliant July moon. The balcony scene was played in good earnest, as you may believe. Romeo pledged his faith, and Juliet owned her love; so that when the company, selected from the great London theatres, moved on to the Hawksford Races, the poor little ignorant village girl was found among its members.

The company for the most part consisted of married folks accustomed to performing together and share the poor profits, each according to his or her degree in the hierarchy of the side-scenes; and the first proof given me of their honesty of purpose was the insistence expressed by our manager on our speedy marriage, and the aid he afforded us in the accomplishment of the ceremony. It took place in a little church in a shabby street of Hawksford, within hearing of the braying trumpets and squeaking fiddles of the race-ground. Algernon Monteagle was the idol of my dreams, although the charm was somewhat diminished when I beheld him attired in the shabby suit of black—part of which belonged to the theatre and part borrowed from a comrade—in which he accompanied me to church, and I suffered still more on beholding for the first time

the signature of Algernon Monteagle, which came out "John Stokes" in a slovenly sprawling hand in the vestry book. In answer to my look of indignant surprise, he laughed and said rather coarsely, I thought: "Why, you never could suppose me fool enough to set such a name in the playbills, any more than I could appear upon the stage as the bearer of it in the clothes I am wearing at this moment." The blank disappointment expressed upon my countenance must have been remarkable indeed, for it served as a merry jest against me amongst the company for many years afterwards.

One consolation, however, was afforded me in the full conviction of my husband's love. And on this conviction I could not help agreeing with the manager's wife, who acted as mother on the occasion, and sought to comfort me under the heavy sorrow brought to my foolish mind by this sudden change from romance to reality.

"Never you mind, my girl, what his name may be. In a little while you will like him better as plain John Stokes than as fine-fangled Algernon Monteagle. Lord bless you! I should not dare to sit down to supper with my husband as 'Horace Bellair,' but feel quite comfortable in my dingy dressing-gown and play-bill curl-papers with my dear old Jimmy Dixon."

From the very first day of our marriage, however, there could be no mistake, no deception on my part as to the future of toil and anxiety which was to be in store for me. My Algernon announced to me formally that he expected me to take a share of the stage business at once, and immediately handed me over to the stage-director to ascertain of what I might be rendered capable. I could not reconcile myself at first to what I considered as a degradation in having to deny the class of poor gentility to which I belonged, and of losing caste by appearing on the boards; but poor old Jimmy Dixon's wife again restored me to my senses by informing me "that whatever she was not too refined to consent to I had no right to refuse; besides which, the company was too poor to 'keep more cats than would catch mice;' and if I did not assist in the business I must be left behind, for nothing was more disreputable to a company than to be followed about by a number of idle young women." The last threat of course decided me on accepting the manager's offer of seven shillings a week, for which I was to play the pages in the grand historical dramas,

the milkmaids in the rustic pieces, the fairies in the pantomime; in short, "all the characters dependent on good looks without talent," said the manager, who judged me at a glance. And, truth to say, this was all I was found fitted for, having no facility for learning long speeches and no memory for retaining them when learnt.

For awhile my life was of the hardest kind. They talk of the idle, vain, and frivolous existence led by actors. I only wish they could have seen me—a poor young creature of seventeen, unaccustomed to work—toiling with hands, heart, and brain during the whole day long in preparing for the heavier toil at night.

I was not long in discovering that poor John Stokes, although he still remained Algernon Monteagle in my admiring eyes, was incapable of the smallest exertion. His mind was enervated with excess of study of every description—shaken by the strain caused by the obligation to produce a never-ending variety of high-flown nonsense to satisfy the small populations of the remote country towns to which our company, although "selected from the great London theatres," was fain to confine its immense attractions. He could never take in the smallest notion of business. He was not wanting in a certain degree of dramatic talent which I, although possessing none at all, could not fail to admire. For hours would he strive, with clenched lips and frowning brow, to comprehend the meaning of the words he was called upon to utter—words which harassed and perplexed his mind while committing them to memory—and only after long study to be discovered as having no meaning at all. Gradually this incessant toil in his profession began to tell upon his nerves and constitution. Of all the trials incidental to the poverty of a poor profession, none are so terrible as those to which the strolling player is subjected during his weary struggle for existence. The absence of all hope of change for the better, and this conviction in spite of the most splendid talents—for it is the conviction of genius misunderstood which is common to the whole brotherhood, from the pompous manager himself down to the poor drunken wight who lights the lamps, sweeps the stage, and plays the victimised policeman in the pantomime—makes the lot of the poor strolling player the hardest of all.

But in spite of poverty, toil, and humiliation, I clung to my husband with un-

changed, undivided love; and I knew that he loved me with the same strong affection in return. The only difference between us was in the quality of that love. To him I was the devoted wife, the humble slave to whom he had but to say, "Do this," and it was done on the instant; or "Come hither," and I was at his side. While to me, although I had long since learned to appreciate the doctrine inculcated in my early married life by Madame Horace Bellair concerning her dear old Jimmy Dixon, as imagination sobered down and Mrs. Bates's library faded into distance, carrying with it the youth and freshness of my soul along with the youth and freshness of complexion and comeliness of shape I had once possessed, I too had grown to feel more at ease in the company of John Stokes than in that of Algernon Monteagle. But I never could behold him in Romeo's black velvet cap with the stage jewel surmounting his brow without feeling that sudden commotion through my whole frame that I had felt on that memorable evening in Farmer Benson's barn; and if, after making his grog or mending his black silk stockings, I was bidden by John to place the jewel in the band of the cap ready for the evening's performance, my fingers, generally so deft and nimble in their haste to obey his bidding, became paralysed as it were and unable to fix it, so that poor John, sometimes jestingly, and sometimes with impatient rudeness, would snatch it from my hand.

It was in the midst of a season of dire distress that the news which, in the natural course of events, should have inspired us with utmost sorrow reached us, bringing both to John and myself the secret joy of which we were both of us ashamed. My aunt, who had refused forgiveness and rejected all communication with us, had died in the solitude and concealment to which my flight had driven her, and the few hundred pounds saved by her out of her scanty income became mine by right. We grew thus suddenly rich by comparison to the state we had hitherto enjoyed, and we became the envy of all our former companions. John's delight was without bounds, loud and clamorous in its expression, and almost indecent in its demonstration, for by the unexpected accession to this little amount of capital he was enabled to realise the one great object, the one desire, the one ambition, the one sole purport of every poor actor's life—that

of becoming lessee and manager of a theatre, no matter where situated, no matter how small, provided it be subject to his own sole decree, law, and management.

It so happened that the little playhouse at Merrington, in Lincolnshire, was just then in the market, and immediately my husband, with the hurry and impatience so characteristic of all weak natures, hastened to take possession, and we parted from the company whose good and evil fortunes we had now shared for a period of ten years. "You will regret us, my girl," said the philosophical Madame Bellair. "Your Algernon Monteagle has had no temptation here. We are all old stagers; he has grown old with us. You are the youngest amongst us, and will therefore stand comparison with those who may be more refined and poetical than yourself, but who are in greater need of the paint-pot and powder-puff to repair the ravages of time." Poor Madame Bellair had fits of grave philosophy now and then, which depended much upon the more or less frequent replenishing of the pewter-pot which was usually standing by her side.

John looked forward with almost childish faith in his own good fortune to the time when he would be enabled to take a "house" in London itself. He was sure the public of Merrington would soon become aware of the treasure so long neglected. He would be enabled to display the genius hitherto unappreciated in the shabby company of which he had so long formed a part; he meant, he said, to choose a very different set of supporters, while his dear Lizzie, instead of being compelled to play the elves and fairies, would be promoted to the part of the fairy queen herself in the new pantomime with which he meant to open the winter season at his new theatre. John was in such high good-humour at his luck that he could not find words to express his contentment, and flattered me on every occasion by proclaiming me to all the world as the source of all his happiness in the long years of struggling poverty past and gone, and of the great fortune he could not fail to realise in the years to come. His gladness brought disappointment to me. The prospect of more work depressed and saddened me. I had been looking forward to the change in our destiny as a release from labour, for I could not but feel, although I dared not own it even to myself, that my

brain was getting weary and my bodily strength overtaxed with the exaggerated toil and responsibility I had so long been made to undergo. I begged hard for a period of repose, but John knew well how to overcome all resistance on my part. He flattered and encouraged me by the usual plea of not being able to succeed at all without me. The pantomime must be brought out for Christmas. The people of Merrington were looking forward to its performance with the greatest anxiety. He promised me the most brilliant costume, all covered with spangles and bullion-fringe, a diadem of golden wheat-ears, and a pair of wings of silver gossamer, all of which belonged to the properties of the theatre; and, moreover, he went to the great shop in the market-place of Merrington, and bought me a scarf of rose-coloured gauze, and placed it on my shoulders, bidding me look in the mirror to see how well it became me. And when I gazed with complacency at my own reflection in the glass I did not observe the haggard paleness of my visage and the sinking of my eyes: the object that caught my sight was the jewel with which he had clasped the scarf upon my shoulder, and which sent forth its prismatic brilliancy as the sunlight streamed in at the window and almost blinded me by the reflection of its fiery rays.

Need I say with what ardour I worked to please my husband—become once more my Algernon Monteagle—after this? The effort was, however, more than my strength could bear. I felt that my physical power was failing me—that my beauty was departing—that my limbs were no longer free and agile as they once had been, and, in spite of all my efforts, I was forced to give up my rôle in the pantomime. Each rehearsal found me more languid than before, until at last the doctor declared that my very life would be endangered by further exertion, and John felt himself compelled to seek for a substitute. So he wrote to a London agent to send him down in all haste a fairy queen competent to undertake the arduous duties of that personage. The answer came immediately. A girl suited to the part had just been discharged from one of the minor theatres—"not from want of talent or punctuality"—so wrote the agent—"but from the strange faculty she seemed to possess of creating jealousy in other women. Not that she ever sought the admiration of the men, for she seemed totally

indifferent to their attentions. And yet old Mother —, who played the Copper Queen for so long at the — Theatre, absolutely refused to let her dance in the ring while her husband, who played the part of the conjuror, twirled round in the midst and pointed his wand at each of the imps in turn. She is no beauty," wrote the correspondent moreover, "and certainly seeks not to attract attention, as some of them do, by dress, for a more slovenly, dirty little object off the stage was never beheld." This last sentence relieved my mind immensely, for I knew it was written in irony, and already the beginning of the letter had produced a strange throbbing at my heart, a flush to my worn and pallid cheeks, and a rushing sound in my ears, the like of which I had never felt before. "She never speaks of herself, and once, when I ventured to enquire what had induced her to turn to the stage for a living, she replied almost fiercely: 'To acquire fame, and one day make my name known to the whole world.' You can judge how we laughed at the idea. As if 'fame' could ever be acquired by a scrubby little thing without beauty, or any one quality to command the admiration which brings it! Even her fancy name is ill-chosen, but she declares that she will take no other until she has conquered fame, and will not resume her own until those she loves have no cause to be ashamed of it. What do you think of that? Pride and sentiment both in such a little meagre orange-coloured thing as *La Misa*! Well, who knows? She may acquire the fame for which she yearns at *Merrington*!"

MUSIC-HALLS.

MUSIC-HALLS, as we now accept the phrase, are of so thoroughly recent a growth, that the present generation has seen their budding and their full bloom—perhaps; for there is really no saying to what extent the fondness for these institutions may reach. It has always struck me as being unfortunate that in nearly every article I have seen written upon the music-halls there has been such a bias, such a determination to write them down, such a tendency to consider them as almost beneath notice, as to rob the description of all power with those for whom it would appear to be intended. There is perhaps no one to be found who is less an admirer

of these "institutions" than myself, but I can see plainly enough that it is of no use to loftily ignore them, or to write of them as if they were pest-houses, when all those who have the slightest acquaintance with them know better, and so are led to judge of the remainder of any hostile arguments from the unfairness displayed in that.

The precursors of the music-halls were the large rooms in public-houses, where were held "harmonic meetings, to which ladies are admitted." This was the more correct and euphonious way of describing them; popularly they were known as "cock and hen clubs," and "free and easies." They were usually conducted by a professional gentleman, supported by two or three ladies and gentlemen, also professional; and the aspiring amateurs who frequented the room made up the evening's entertainment. A few houses had rooms regularly devoted to what we should now call music-hall business: the *Mogul*, in Drury Lane; the *Standard*, in the Vauxhall Bridge Road, were among the most prominent: but they were only few, and the names of the stars appearing there had only local fame. The earnings of these latter were but small, their appearance shabby; and such an idea as the Great Bounce doing his four "turns" per night, and drawing twelve or fifteen pounds per week for each turn, was, of course, never dreamt of by any of the luckless ones who bloomed in such unkindly days—the heroes who lived before Agamemnon.

The first music-hall of real fame was the *Canterbury*, a large saloon attached to a public-house not far from *Astley's Theatre*, as it was then called, in Lambeth, and the experiment was a success at once. The hall was crowded nightly—where all the artists suddenly sprang from used to puzzle some of us—and features of a more ambitious kind were eventually added. For some time, however, the success of this music-hall appeared to provoke no rivalry; but all at once—or so it seemed to me—a fever for opening music-halls spread throughout London, the force of which continues almost unabated to this day.

Concurrent with the increase in the number of music-halls has been, curiously enough, a great increase in the number of London theatres. The crowds which fill the one do not seem in the least to interfere with the success of the other; so that it would appear that theatres and music-halls "tapped" different sections of the population for their support; and I am inclined

to think that, to a certain extent, this is true. I have not found the persons best acquainted with the performances at the halls to be the most familiar also with theatrical performances; and consequently, as a rule, those most devoted to theatres appear to care least about music-halls. The same rule applies, so far as my experience goes, to the provinces.

The most striking feature connected with these halls is the entirely new and distinct class of performers, performances, and compositions they have called into existence. If the germs of all these were to be found in past times, they were so few and obscure that they attracted no attention; but this cannot be said of the present styles. It is quite a special trade to write songs or compose music for the singers at the music-halls, and it may safely be argued that a worse mass of rubbish than most of the songs nightly delivered in them was never written; and yet I doubt if the best and most highly-trained pens in the kingdom could, if they tried their hardest, write anything which would hit so exactly as do these lyrics. I daresay, too, that the men who write this stuff—or, at all events, some of them—could write a great deal better if there were a demand for better writing; but in view of what is produced, it is difficult to believe that all are capable of better things. My readers have only to buy a penny song-book, with a selection of the most popular music-hall ditties, and they will be astonished—if not familiar with the literature—at the meaningless rubbish which forms the bulk of the songs. The style, however, is recognised, and a man able to write in it has his recognised value; so have his compositions, which are defended and guarded against piracy with most jealous care. Examples of this could be culled by hundreds from the Era, the great theatrical and music-hall organ. Only imagine it being worth the while of an author to write to the press complaining that his song had been pirated, a song which boasted the following spirited chorus:

Don't, dearest Joseph! now don't, there's a dear,
Don't be so naughty, there's somebody near;
Supposing, dear Joseph, mamma was to know,
Oh, what a row there would be, darling Joe.

And this is really, when compared with many, a very favourable specimen: so favourable, that it positively took the prize at a competition!

The themes of these songs are not so varied as might be supposed, and they

seem to appear in batches or classes. At one time the singer was always celebrating the beauty of his mistress, and the very superior suppers and wines had in her company. Akin to this was the class which extolled the glories of champagne; and Champagne Charlie, Moët and Chandon, and Clicquot, were all in one strain, and were among the most popular songs of the day. And this enthusiasm over champagne songs, and the wonderful instinct to divine that such a theme would "take," seems to me about the strangest of the phenomena connected with public amusements. "Motto songs," which embody about as much trashy and superficial sentiment as all the rest of our literature put together, were, and to a considerable extent still are, very popular. All the writer had to do was to take some common saying for his title and text, put two or three commonplace verses to it, each full of what I may call second-hand sentiment, and his motto song was ready.

Among the other effusions, some hundreds, I should think, turn with exact similarity on the woes of a youth infatuated with a lass, who borrows money of him, and then cruelly leaves him. This particular legend was almost omnipresent a few years ago; and though the borrowing was sometimes omitted, it was about the most "taking" and "screaming" point. Surely the audiences had not all been so unfortunate in their early loves; but if not, whence this exquisitely keen appreciation of the narrative?

After indulging in what will appear wholesale denunciation of the quality of music-hall songs, I am nevertheless ready to admit that some are very much better than those described, some telling a capital story; and I have heard too among them a parody, so good as to be an imitation, of Longfellow's Village Blacksmith, one of the neatest and best things of the kind I ever met with.

I am naturally led from this subject to the charge of indecency and coarseness, so often made against music-hall songs and singers. This accusation is brought most frequently, I fancy, by those who have the least experience of the entertainment provided at these saloons; and, as it is only very partially true, palpably weakens all the arguments, however sound, which may on other grounds be advanced against them. There are double entendres, sometimes, and sometimes allusions which are gross, but I am sufficiently the defender of

music-halls to declare that these are exceptional, and yearly become so more decidedly. Nevertheless, the imputation of coarseness is partially true, and there is no disputing the fact that a few of the leading professionals indulge in "gag"—i.e., words beyond the lines written for them—which reflect no credit on themselves, less on the managers who do not check it, and still less on those who sit and listen to it, although I have always heard many murmurs, which ought to have been hisses and yells. There is one man especially—whose name I am almost tempted to quote—who has for years been notorious for the indelicate character of his "gag;" and were I on the magisterial bench, no house should ever have a license which allowed him to appear, after due warning. Yet such men are assuredly the exception and not the rule; in fact, where decent mechanics, and others too, take their wives, sweethearts, sisters, and children, the line must be drawn. To say nothing of police supervision, the people who frequent music-halls are no more fond of exposing their families to contamination than are others. What evil there is, is generally found in the "gag" alluded to, or in the manner and grimace of the singer, which gives broadness where it would never be suspected, and could hardly have been intended; but, once for all, this is exceptional.

The tunes appropriated to these songs are quite of a genus apart from all other tunes; those of the negro minstrel troupes having the greatest affinity to them. There is no mistake about a great number of them being very pretty and "catching;" and all have, or should have, a certain swing in them, by which we recognise the music-hall style. Their patriotic and sentimental songs, of which there are a great many, are generally vulgar or mawkish; sometimes both, as for instance:

So bless the Earl of Shaftesbury,
And they must be great fools
Who would not praise the man who raised
The British ragged-schools.

The music to this class is very often adapted, but the comic melodies, without being strikingly original, are fresh enough to attract, and have usually a facility for lending themselves to a chorus. This style of composition has been well followed in the Sankey and Moody hymns, several of which are so much like the songs I am now referring to, that one could easily believe they had done duty in that capacity

also. At any rate, they are just like them in their swing, and their wonderful attraction for a chorus, and like them, too, are very easy to sing. Every one familiar with these hymns must be able to recall specimens of the style I mean.

A great deal is always said about the amount of drinking which goes on at music-halls, and the practice is denounced as violently as if it were in every case the most debased form of drunkenness which was indulged in; but here, again, the absurdity of the exaggeration more than defeats itself. To those who object to all drinking under all circumstances, of course the glasses of ale, or of grog, at a music-hall are very dreadful; but otherwise I am not inclined to think there is much harm done in the way of excessive drinking at these places—a pretty good test can be applied by any one who chooses to note how often a disturbance is created by a drunken man, or how often one has to be expelled.

Indeed, to my thinking—and, as I have said, I am not an admirer of music-halls—the worst harm fostered by them is not indelicacy, is not drunkenness, but it is the low standard of musical and literary excellence with which they teach their patrons to be satisfied, and the consequent depravation of taste which prevents them from wishing for anything better. For this, however, the government is chiefly to blame; every time any music-hall proprietor has endeavoured to move out of the beaten track, and to give his customers a really elevating entertainment, he has found that he was transgressing the law by infringing the ridiculous Act of Parliament under which the theatrical amusements of the people are given over to the tender mercies of the Lord Chamberlain, and so he has been forced back to his slangy songs, with their silly choruses. Some of the halls put an end to this state of things by taking out a theatrical license, so that in the very same building they can do the very same things for offering which they had previously been fined—the Alhambra and Philharmonic are examples. In others the managers still occasionally make a gallant struggle to present their patrons with more solid and wholesome fare than is usually supplied them, but generally come to grief in the attempt. The manager of the nearest unsuccessful theatre has only to apply for a summons and the hapless music-hall caterer is sure to be fined, if not for producing a stage-play or other show actually defined

by the Act, then for giving an "entertainment of the stage"—elastic words which to the ordinary lay mind would seem to include even singing or dancing of any kind. But the magistrates know better, and the quarter sessions justices get out of the difficulty by the help of the same convenient bridge, and the music-halls—and the public—suffer accordingly.

I have no space here to speak of the acrobats, who should have a sketch to themselves, and who have multiplied so immensely that special legislation has been attempted for the protection of the youthful members; one can only wonder where all the acrobats suddenly came from. As for the dancing we see at the music-halls, it is neither better nor worse than that seen elsewhere; the ballet and all its offshoots always have been, and always will be, just what we choose to think them.

Nobody who has not seen something of the business can have any idea of the intense admiration felt for a successful music-hall artist by the regular patrons of these entertainments, or the great desire that many persons have to enter on such a life. This desire is often felt in circles where we should hardly expect to find it. I remember one young *débutante*, who was, it appeared to me, a very pretty girl of about one-and-twenty, and so I expressed myself to a friend who is of the cognoscenti. He told me that she was a young married woman of great respectability, living in very good style, as, indeed, her address proved; but that both herself and her husband had an irresistible desire for her to make her way on the saloon stage; that she was then receiving thirty shillings per week, and had invested one hundred and fifty pounds in a professional wardrobe to begin with. Her mother or her husband came with her every night, as I saw, and by-and-by she got on very well, and was prominent among those in her line.

I must leave it to others to explain why—it is a fact beyond all question—Jews are so exceedingly fond of dramatic and musical entertainments; why they furnish so many aspirants for music-hall honours; and why, proverbially cautious as they are, Jewish money is always forthcoming for theatrical or musical speculations. I should say, that pretty nearly a third of the novices I have known among the music-hall artists have been Jews; and there were, when I knew most about them, several persons singing under titles by

no means suggestive of their race, but who were really of the élite of Aldgate and Whitechapel.

This reminds me of what is, after all, one of the queerest features connected with my subject: the names selected by these performers. All previously conceived notions of the name sufficing to indicate the country must be set at naught by the student of music-hall appellatives: and it was always so, even in the infancy of the institutions: for I remember, now many years ago, when "Herr Deani, the celebrated contortionist," was in his zenith. Herr Reklaw, too, is curious German, especially when read backwards; while John Holtum, sometimes Herr Holtum, from Berlin, presents a pleasing difficulty to the linguist. We have the Fausts, of course, and also Tula, who was the Modern Sampson, the Man with the Iron Jaw; also the Great Ohmy, who was the Star of the Air. There are besides, D'Onra, and Nestor, and the Great Stella de Vere! After these The Marquess de Gonza sounds quite prosaic; but Wainratta, the King of the Lofty Wire, sounds well, though calculated to puzzle the guesser as to the country in which he was "raised;" as does Steve Ethardo. On a certain marriage of distinction taking place a few years back, a lady, with infinite presence of mind, advertised that her professional name would in future be Mademoiselle Louise Lorne; while there is scarcely a name in the aristocracy which does not figure in the list. "Professor" is a prefix of which music-hall artists are very fond; and there are, consequently, plenty of professors: "Professor Blank, with his Royal Punch and Judy," is a pretty fair example of anti-climax.

It is understood that it is quite legitimate to select a well-sounding and well-looking name, and that it becomes as solely the property of the chooser as if he or she had been baptised in it; and in defence of these names they will quarrel most expressively in print. They do quarrel, too. I doubt if a single number of the Era appears in a year in which the advertisement columns do not contain proofs of feuds raging among these artists; their opinions of each other being occasionally given in very plain language. A champion dancer challenged another champion a little while back, and I only regret I cannot quote the indignant response of the second, who evidently considered himself as of a higher status than the challenger; it was really worth reading. So was a dispute

as to which group of three had the greater right to be called *Les Trois Diables*.

Sometimes a great artist (they are nearly all "great") will launch a bitter sarcasm by informing the public that at his benefit the receipts were twenty-nine pounds eighteen shillings and sixpence—and no gassing; or that he is recalled six times a night, and always asked to return to his old shop—no gassing. "Gassing" I humbly opine to be bragging and boasting with exaggeration; the "shop" is the place of entertainment; and "a comfortable shop for a steady man" is an expression of everyday use—see *Era* advertisements again. The artists are very fond also of expressing their thanks in print to So-and-So, Esquire, and others, for kind offers, which the said artists are unable to accept; but this is done so ostentatiously that one is compelled to suspect that a desire of showing how many "kind offers" they are obliged to refuse from their great popularity is at the bottom of this obtrusive gratitude.

I will conclude by stating what is already tolerably well known—that the gains of a successful music-hall performer are very large; and I may add that as no great training, no special learning, not even in music, is required, and as the most valuable qualities are a little modest self-assurance and animal spirits, I do not know any other profession in which it is so easy to reap a harvest. From thirty to fifty pounds a week, as is not unfrequently made by these artists, would be considered a tolerable harvest by many of those who fancy themselves entitled to look down on the Great Bounce and his "comfortable shop."

eighteen: slim, grey-eyed girls, both always dressed with a kind of exquisitely severe simplicity, and carrying their heads with an unconscious stateliness, which somehow reminded you of tall white lilies swaying on their slender stems.

None knew much about them individually, for they were never seen apart, had never gone to school, and had been kept closely at home, first, as Mrs. Dysart said, on account of their studies, and next, because she did not go out herself, and disapproved of such young girls doing so without her. Many people, indeed, pitied them greatly, but the pity was wasted, for they had no consciousness of requiring it. They were devotedly attached to their mother and to each other. They infinitely preferred their Surrey home and scenery to the dusty, sun-baked, monotonous Austrian town in which their early life had been spent; and what with books, painting, and music within doors, and long country rambles without, were almost as well content with their life as the mother who had planned it for them. With her will, indeed, I doubt if they would have ever seen any change in it, but even she, resolute as she was, could not manage matters quite as far as that, and, fortunately for the girls, there were people who interfered to prevent them from being reared in that total isolation from the outer world which, if persisted in, would probably have led to their growing up either morbid or eccentric. These people were Lady Ashleigh of Dilworth and her sister-in-law.

It was no use for Mrs. Dysart to say that she was unable to keep up any intimacy even with the latter, who had been a schoolfellow of her own in their girlish days, as Dilworth was quite out of calling distance unless you had a carriage, and she was not possessed of that luxury; Mrs. Ashleigh only answered: "Then I shall come and see you instead, and bring Margaret with me. She has taken quite a fancy to you;" and the two did so accordingly, calling at Hillbrow whenever they happened to be in the neighbourhood, and keeping up a constant little interchange of kindly note-writing and small offerings of fruit and flowers, against which even Mrs. Dysart was not able, had she been willing, to steel herself.

Not that she went to Dilworth more than very, very rarely herself. She was invited often enough, and Lionel Ashleigh, the rector's son, would drive over in the pony-carriage for her, or the brougham would be

VISITED ON THE CHILDREN.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER II. SYBIL.

I THINK it is time here to say something about the Dysart girls.

They had been still in the schoolroom when their mother first came to settle at Hillbrow—small damsels of ten and twelve, wearing short frocks and sun-bonnets, and their fair hair plaited in pig-tails; but that was nearly eight years ago, and at the time when the present part of my story commences Sybil had just reached her twentieth year, while Jenny, or Jane, as she was properly called, was not yet quite

sent from the Hall for the same purpose, only to return with a note from the widow, conveying her love and thanks, but she was too unwell or too busy to leave home; but when good-natured Lady Ashleigh took pity on the two little soft-voiced girls, and insisted that they should be allowed to join in her own children's croquet-matches and birthday-parties, the mother was not able to be so inexorable. And thus in course of time visits to Dilworth became the chief, if not the only, amusement and variety in the girls' lives.

Mrs. Ashleigh had no daughters of her own, and was rather brusque and stately of manner, having indeed the reputation of being the proudest woman in that part of Surrey; so that Sybil and Jenny did not care quite so much for spending days with her, or for going for drives in the Rectory carriage. In their youthful vernacular she was mamma's friend; but Lady Ashleigh, smiling, buxom, gossipy, and maternal, was a sort of second mamma herself, with nothing in the least awe-inspiring or redoubtable about her; and as for Adelaide, her only daughter, she and Sybil struck up such a friendship that if it had not been for Mrs. Dysart's restrictions they would have been almost inseparable; and as it was, used to keep up a voluminous correspondence and interchange of wonderful confidences and home-made presents, after the most approved fashion of girlish intimacies. Seldom a week passed, never longer, without the young Dysarts and Ashleighs meeting either at Hillbrow or the Hall; and when in course of time John Ashleigh, the eldest son, got engaged to some grand personage's daughter, and a ball was to be given at Dilworth in his fiancée's honour, nothing would suit Lady Ashleigh or Adelaide but that Sybil, who was then eighteen, should make her first appearance in company with the latter at the said entertainment.

"Ada has set her heart on it, and the girls are so nearly of an age it would be nice for them to make their *début* together. You must give in to it some day or another, you know," Lady Ashleigh said. And though Mrs. Dysart demurred greatly, and would fain have refused altogether, she was not allowed to do so. John Ashleigh came over himself with a message from the Honourable Miss Victoria Plantagenet—of which I fear that high-born damsel was wholly unconscious—that she would be grievously hurt by Sybil's non-appearance; and Adelaide entreated, and even Sybil,

docile as she was in general, cried and coaxed till at last Mrs. Dysart gave way and consented. She knew, after it was done, that it would be no good trying to keep her choice rose-bud hidden in the home garden any longer. She hated with all her heart to say the word which must open the gate and sanction its being seen by others. But after all, as the baronet's wife said, the thing would have to be done some day or another; and if so, how could it be better than under Lady Ashleigh's own roof and chaperonage?

She was right. The gates were opened, and the rose-bud seen; and after that there was no shutting up the pretty flower again for good. More little gaieties, both at Hall and Rectory, followed that first one in the Honourable Victoria's honour, and were succeeded by a host of return entertainments from the neighbourhood, including a gorgeous dinner-party at the De Boonyens', and to all of these Sybil Dysart was invited as the newest and acknowledged beauty of the year.

She did not appear at them. Her mother sat down and wrote a little budget of refusals for her, one to Hapsburg Hall in especial, whereby Sybil was deprived of the pleasure of consuming peaches at half-a-guinea apiece, and salmon at five-and-sixpence a pound; but all the same the Rubicon had been passed, and henceforward whenever any entertainment was on the tapis, the question as to whether Miss Dysart would be present was sure to be one of the chief subjects for discussion among the rest of the invited, and one which was answered sufficiently seldom in the affirmative for it to be never failing in interest. Indeed, unless Sybil was to go with one of the Ashleigh ladies, it was almost certain that she would not go at all, as, failing every other excuse, Mrs. Dysart had always the stock one that she never went out herself, and Jenny being too young to share her sister's gaieties, it was pleasanter for the elder girl to stay at home than go to them by herself; and as Mrs. Ashleigh was too lazy to care about parties at all, and Lady Ashleigh, after her son's marriage, left Adelaide's chaperonage chiefly to him and the Honourable Victoria, this was what Sybil most frequently did.

It was an evening in late summer, and the close of an unusually sultry day, when a girl might have been seen making her way along an unfrequented road about midway between Leatherhead and the little

village of Chadleigh End—a girl wearing a dark blue linen dress and tippet, and a big black straw hat which was tied down securely under the softest, roundest little chin ever granted to a woman for the ensnaring of the unwarier sex, and which hid everything but a gleam of sunny hair coiled in a loose twist on the nape of her slender neck, and the glimmer of a pair of eyes so infinitely sweet and guileless in their liquid depths of greyish blue that anyone gazing into them would have been more than stoic had he turned away and never looked again, yet would have taken the second glance with greater reverence than the first, for the maidenly purity and frankness shining out of their serene unconsciousness of admiration.

Very pretty in truth was Sybil Dysart ; though I doubt if she had one remarkable feature in her small fair face, for grey-blue eyes and golden hair are as common as blackberries in this English land of ours. Pretty in the supple grace of her slight round figure, the sunshiny brightness of her expression, and the almost dazzling pearl-colour of her fair skin : too pretty to be walking alone ; though it was indeed only by an unforeseen chance that such an event had occurred ; and the path she was pursuing was so lonely a one, that it was a rare event for anyone to be seen in it.

A good many years before some rich man had bought all the land about here for building purposes, had cut out a long road across it, branching off into lateral ones at regular intervals, and planted young trees and shrubs along the borders of the intersecting meadow-land. It was to be a fashionable suburb to the old-fashioned town of Leatherhead ; or, better still, to become a new town itself, a town of handsome villa residences for the convenience of Londoners living in the country ; and then— Well, somehow it never became anything at all ! Perhaps land went down just at that time and the investment did not pay ; or the owner died and the property went into Chancery. Anyhow it remained as it was, a long sloping hill cut up into fields of wheat or turnips, and intersected by broad lengthy roads, long since thickly overgrown with grass and bordered by a narrow fringe of trees, chiefly firs and larches, which, after all these years, still proved the bleak, unshelteredness of their situation by being as small and thin as though they had not been planted a twelvemonth.

Sybil had chosen this route in preference to returning home by the high-road along the valley beneath, because, though it was about three times as long as the latter it was far more unfrequented, and, as such, likely to excuse her in her mother's eyes for being out at such a late hour alone.

" But mamma ought not to be angry when I tell her how ill poor old Granny Smith was, and that she might have died if I had not stayed with her till her daughter came," the girl thought. " After all, one may be too particular. It will be dark before I get home by this road."

It was getting dusk already, and she quickened her steps as she spoke, glancing somewhat anxiously at the sky around her. There had been a threatening feel in the air all day, although there was no rain yet. Above her head, indeed, and towards the east, the sky was still a pale blue, flecked only by little, soft, grey-white clouds ; but all round the horizon was of an ominous leaden hue, rising higher and higher as the day declined ; and the west was one vast expanse of dull flame-colour, deepening to bronze near the horizon, and covered with ragged grey clouds. One of these latter, darker and inkier than the rest, and with torn and bleeding edges, concealed the sun from view ; but above and below it the rays of the sinking luminary darted out like the fingers of a fiery hand, behind whose burning touch the cloudy vapour around turned to a blaze of molten copper, while far in its depths you could see by the glare of those giant fingers the gleaming edges of yet more and more cloud banks crowding back into the further space beyond. Beneath this sky the lonely grass road cresting the hill took a yellow mournful tinge ; the veined blossoms of the mal-low turned to a faint unwholesome colour ; and the blackish-green berries of the woody nightshade, just changing here and there to scarlet, seemed to leap out of the hedges with a baleful gleam. There was a moaning sound among the spare dwarfish trees, as though the echoes of some terrible storm were pent within their branches. A dull grey mist hung over Ashted Common on one side, and, creeping round, almost blotted out the square grey church-tower and red roofs of little Leatherhead in the valley, and stretched its pale arms even up the darkling slope of Fetcham Downs on the other side of the river. Grim old Ranmoor, with its landmark steeple on the summit, loomed purply-black and sharp

against the sky; and down in the valley the "clank, clank" of a cattle-bell sounded like a note of solemn warning.

Involuntarily Sybil stood still and looked about her. There was something weird and unpleasant in the threatening loneliness of the scene, and she half meditated turning back and making her way to the high-road in the valley beneath. The impulse, however, was checked. The young lady had a very honest and deep-seated fear of tramps, and was well aware (which some of my town readers may not be) that this unpleasant waif of society is much more frequently to be met on the high-road than in lanes and by-ways; and that, in harvest time and Derby week in particular, it is almost impossible to walk along any of the main thoroughfares within five miles of Epsom, without encountering some of the species prowling along either singly or in couples; but always unwashed, evil-eyed, and surly, or sleeping off last night's potations by the road-side.

Thinking over these conflicting terrors Sybil remained a moment or so stationary, her slim upright figure in its straight blue gown relieved against the coppery sky, her head a little turned on one side, gazing wistfully down the steep grass-grown road leading to the valley; but in the end the actual prevailed over the imaginary. Tramps were facts, and very terrifying and unpleasant ones, whereas the vaguely nervous feeling which made her shrink from pursuing this lonely hillside route had no tangible foundation whatever; and just at that moment to cheer her she heard the crack of a sportsman's gun, and saw a covey of birds rise into the air, only a little way distant. The sound spoke to her of human companionship in the neighbourhood, and banished her terrors on the instant. She went on her way without any longer hesitation.

It was a solitary walk certainly. The deserted road stretched onward and upward till it reached the brow of the hill, and then crept away downwards again in one long unbroken line. There was no house in sight, for the hedges and plantations on either side were just tall enough to shut out any view of the surrounding neighbourhood; no sound but the moaning of the unfelt storm; not even a second shot from the invisible sportsman; and, when she stopped for a moment to gather a tuft of tawny yellow toad-flax from the way-side, she was startled to notice how dusk it was getting, and that the sun and

the fiery splendour had entirely disappeared behind a dense bank of cloud. She had a good way still to go; but by leaving the road, and striking across a turnip-field, she knew that it could be materially shortened, and she took that step accordingly, keeping well under the hedge, where a dry grassy ditch made smoother walking for her pretty feet.

Unfortunately for Sybil, she could not have done a more foolish thing; for the hedgerow was more than high enough to conceal her graceful little figure from anyone on the other side, and almost in the same moment there was a rustling sound low down in the fence. Something dark burst out and dashed across her very feet; a loud "crack, crack" followed it, so close to her it sent a hot tingle through every vein in her body, like an electric shock, and made her utter a sharp scream; while simultaneously a big retriever crashed through the same hole in the hedge, and went tearing over the turnips after the flying object in front, which still kept on its way unhurt.

"Good God!" exclaimed a voice on the other side of the thorn-bushes. "Is anyone there? Have I hurt you? For Heaven's sake, answer if you can."

There was no answer, however, for the simple reason that Sybil was quite unable to give one. The shot had not struck her—had, indeed, almost miraculously spared her, perforating the bow on her hat and whizzing within a hair's-breadth of her pretty face; but the sudden shock and terror, coming on her previous nervous state, had for the moment been almost as bad, and she had sunk on to the grassy side of the ditch, half lying, half kneeling, and trembling in every limb and nerve as with an ague-fit. She was not even conscious that anyone was speaking, until the speaker, rendered more anxious by the silence following on that sudden scream, had forced his way by sheer strength through the stiff brambles and was lifting her to her feet, the while he asked, in tones more full of concern than ever, if he had really shot her. Was she much hurt? Would she not try to speak?

Sybil did try then, and managed to stand up and stammer out a word or two of reassurance; but the effort brought on a nervous fit of crying, and she had to submit to be supported by one strong arm, while the other hand took off her hat and felt her fair little head and throat in

very evident alarm and anxiety, until she could recover herself enough to falter the request :

"Please let me go. I can stand alone. Indeed, I am not hurt; I—I am only frightened."

"Are you sure?" in a tone of great relief mingled with no little doubt. "Why, your hair smells of the powder! Did none of the shot strike you? My confounded carelessness! I shall never forgive myself for it, as it is; but, indeed, I had no idea that anyone could be on this side of the hedge. Do tell me again that you are not hurt. Are you quite certain of it?"

Poor Sybil began to feel horribly ashamed. Of all things in this world that which Mrs. Dysart most contemned and despised in girls was anything like affectation or display, or the capability of making "scenes;" and to have shrieked out in this ridiculous way and then almost gone into hysterics, occasioning all this remorse and terror when she was not even touched, was too silly. What would mamma say? And yet so shaken was she still that she could not help a little sob between every other word as she assured the unhappy culprit that "Indeed, he had not hurt her. There was no harm done. It was only the shock, and she was very foolish to make such a fuss."

"Pray don't say that. It was all my fault, and you are not making a fuss at all. How could you help being frightened? Thank Heaven it was not worse," the stranger exclaimed almost passionately; and as he was still kneeling on one knee beside her, and holding her shaking hands in his, Sybil could not help looking in his face as she lifted her own, with a pale little effort at a smile on it, to reassure him. It was only a hasty glance, for there was so much tenderness and admiration in the pitying look that met hers that involun-

tarily her eyes sank beneath it; and she drew herself further away, taking her hands from the clasp of which before they had been almost unconscious, and flushing timidly. Yet the face at which she had looked was handsome enough to warrant a second glance, far more beautiful than pretty Sybil Dysart's ever was or would be—one of those faces, indeed, which you oftener see in pictures or marble than in real life, with the short curled hair and straight purely-cut features of a young Greek god; eyes blue and long-lashed as a woman's, with a woman's power too of pathos and tenderness; and a mouth so absolutely winning in its full sharply-defined curves that it was little wonder the words that issued from it seldom failed to work their will with the auditor; and it almost seemed a pity to shade it under the fringe of soft brown moustache which overhung the upper lip, and gave a tone of manliness to features which might otherwise have been too effeminate in their delicate, purely-coloured chiselling. Certainly Sybil had never seen so fair a specimen of manhood in all her young life before among the men she knew, or, indeed, anywhere save in a beautiful Roman cameo which her mother had set in a brooch, and about which the girls used to dispute in their earlier days: Sybil calling it St. John the Divine, while Jenny persisted that it was only the Apollo.

Truly Jenny was right. There was far more of the Apollo than the saint in him whom the cameo resembled, and were he to be judged by all the harm which even in his short life had been wrought by that beautiful sunlit face of his, all the broken hearts and perjured vows, and blurred or tarnished fames, it might be doubted if even long years of penance and seclusion would have procured for Gareth Vane canonisation in the Sacred College.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIKEN," "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER XII. "AND TO THE DINNER FASTE THEY HEM SPEDDE."

MR. MACCLOSKIE'S suggestions for new hot-houses at Goring Abbey were on so large a scale, as to necessitate a good deal of consultation with architect and builder before the new constructions and alterations of existing structures were put in hand. The head gardener at South Hill had tried his hardest to secure the whole organisation and direction of the work for himself, and to have large powers in the choice of the men who were to carry it out.

"Ye'll not need any architect, Mr. Goring, if ye'll joost let me explain my mind to the builder," said this modest Caledonian. "Architects know a deal about the Parthenon, and the Temple of the Winds, and that kind of old-fashioned classical stuff, but there's not one of 'em knows how to plan a good workable hot-house, or to build a flue that won't smoke when the wind's contrary. Architects are very good for the fronts of club-houses and ceevil-service stores, and that like; but if you trust your new houses to an architect, I'll give odds when they're done there'll be no place for me to put my coals. If you'll just give me free scope—"

"You are very good, Mr. MacCloskie," answered Gerald with velvety softness, "but my father was a thoroughly practical man, and I believe he knew as much of the science of construction as any man living; yet he always employed an architect when he wanted anything built for himself, were it only a dust-bin. I'll stick to his lines."

"Very well, sir, you must please yourself. But an orchid-house is a creetical thing to build. The outside of it may be as handsome as St. Peter's at Rome; but your orchids won't thrive unless they like the inside arrangements, and for them ye'll want a practical man."

"I'll get a practical man, Mr. MacCloskie; you may be sure of that," answered Gerald, ineffably calm, though the Scot was looking daggers.

The morning before Mrs. Ferrers's family dinner was devoted to the architect, who came down from London to Goring Abbey expressly to advise and be instructed. He was entertained at luncheon at the Abbey; and Lina drove over under her aunt's wing to meet him, while Gerald's thoroughbred hack—a horse of such perfect manners that it mattered very little whether his rider had hands or no hands—ambled along the turfy borders of the pleasant country road beside the phaeton.

Daphne had her day all to herself, since, knowing her to be alone at South Hill, Edgar had no excuse for going there; and, as Mr. Turchill argued with himself, a man must give some portion of his life to the dearest old mother and the most picturesque old house in the county. So Edgar, with his fancies flying off and circling about South Hill, contrived to spend a moony day at home, mending his fishing-rods, reviewing his guns, writing a few letters, and going in and out of his mother's homely old-fashioned morning-room twenty times between breakfast and luncheon.

Mrs. Turchill had been invited to the family dinner, and had accepted the invitation, though she was not given to dissipation of any kind, and she and her son found a good deal to say about the

coming feast during Edgar's desultory droppings-in.

"I hope you'll like her, mother," said Edgar, stopping, with a gun in one hand and an oily rag in the other, to look dreamily across the moat to the quiet meadows beyond, where the dark red Devon cows contrasted deliciously with the fresh green turf, sprinkled with golden buttercups and silvery marguerites.

"Like her!" echoed Mrs. Turchill, lifting her soft blue eyes in mild astonishment from her matronly task of darning one of the best damask table-cloths. "Why she is the sweetest girl I know. I would have given ten years of my life for you to have married her."

This was awkward for Edgar, who had spoken of Daphne, while Mrs. Turchill thought of Madoline.

"Not with my consent, mother," he said laughing, and reddening as he laughed. "I couldn't have spared a single year. But I wasn't speaking of Madoline just then. I know of old how fond you are of her. I was talking of poor little Daphne, whom you haven't seen since she came from her French school."

"French school!" exclaimed Mrs. Turchill contemptuously. "I hate the idea of those foreign schools, regular Jesuitical places, where they take girls to operas and theatres, and give them fine notions," pursued the Saxon matron, whose ideas on the subject were slightly mixed. "Why couldn't Sir Vernon send her to the Misses Tompion, at Leamington? That's a respectable school if you like. Good evangelical principles, separate bedrooms, and plain English diet. I hope the French school hasn't spoilt Daphne. She was a pretty little girl with bright hair, I remember, but she had rather wild ways. Something too much of a tomboy for my taste."

"She was so young, mother, when you saw her last—not fifteen."

"Well, I suppose French governesses have tamed her down, and that she's pretty stiff and prim by this time," said Mrs. Turchill with chilling indifference.

"No, mother, she is a kind of girl whom no training would ever make conventional. She is thoroughly natural, original even, and doesn't mind what she says."

"That sounds as if she talked slang," said Mrs. Turchill, who although the kindest of women in her conduct, could be severe of speech on occasion, "and of all things I detest slang in a woman. I hope she is industrious. The idleness of the young women of the present day is a crying sin."

Edgar Turchill seemed hardly to be aware of this last remark. He was polishing the gun metal industriously, with that horrible oily rag which accompanied him everywhere on his muddling mornings at home.

"She's accomplished, I suppose—plays, and sings, and paints on velvet?"

"Ye—es; that's to say I'm not sure about the velvet," answered Edgar faintly, not remembering any special artistic performances of Daphne's except certain attempts on a drawing-block, which had seemed to him too green and too cloudy to lead to much, and which he had never beheld in an advanced stage. "She is awfully fond of reading," he added in rather a spasmodic manner, after an interval of silent thought. "The poetry she knows would astonish you."

"That would be easy," retorted Mrs. Turchill. "My father and mother didn't approve of poetry, and Cowper, Thomson, and Kirke White were the only poets allowed to be read by us girls at old Miss Tompion's—these ladies are nieces of my Miss Tompion, you know, Edgar."

"How can I help knowing it, mother, when you've told me a hundred and fifty times?" exclaimed her son, more impatiently than his wont.

"Well, Edgar, my dear, if you're tired of my conversation——"

"No, you dear peppery old party, not a bit. Go on like an old dear as you are. Only I thought you were rather hard upon poor little Daphne, just now."

"How can I be hard upon her, when I haven't seen her for the last three years! Dear, dear, what a small place Leamington was in my time," pursued Mrs. Turchill, musing blandly upon the days of her youth; "but it was much more select. None of these rich people from Birmingham; none of these Londoners coming down to hunt; but a very superior class—invalids, elderly people who came to drink the waters, and to consult Doctor Jephson."

"It must have been lively," murmured Edgar, not deeply interested.

"It was not lively, Edgar, but it was select," corrected Mrs. Turchill with dignity, as she paused with her head on one side to admire the neatness of her own work.

She was the kindest and best of mothers, but Edgar felt, on this particular occasion, that she was rather stupid, and a trifle narrow in her ideas. A purely rustic life has its disadvantages; and a life which is

one long procession of placid, prosperous days, knowing little more variety than the change of the seasons, is apt to blunt the edges of the keenest intellect. Mrs. Turchill ought to have been more interested in Daphne, Edgar thought.

"She will be delighted with her when she sees her," he reasoned, comforting himself. "Who can help being charmed with a girl who is so thoroughly charming?"

And then he took up his gun and his rag, and strolled away to another part of the roomy old house, so soberly and thoroughly old-fashioned: not with the jimerack spurious old-fashion of to-day, but with the grave ponderous realities of centuries ago—walls four feet thick, deep recessed windows, massive untrimmed joists, low ceilings, narrow passages, oak wainscoting, inconveniences and shortcomings of all kinds; but the subtle charm of the remote past, the romantic feeling of a house that has many histories, pervading everything. Edgar would not have changed Hawksyard and his three thousand a year for Goring Abbey and a million. The house and the lands around it—or at any rate the lands—had belonged to his race from time immemorial, far back in the dim days of the Heptarchy. Tradition held that the first of the Turchills had been a sokeman who possessed a yard of land on the old feudal tenure, one of his obligations being that he should breed hawks for the king's falconers, and thus the place had come in time to be called Hawksyard, long after the last hawk bred there had flown away to join some wild branch of the honey-buzzard family in the tree-tops of primeval Arden, and the yard of land had swelled into a very respectable manor. Edgar rather liked to believe that the founder of his race had been a sokeman, who had held thirty acres of land from the king at a penny an acre, and had furnished labourers for the royal harvest, and had ridden up and down the field with a wand in his hand to see that his men worked properly. This curious young man was as proud of Turchill the sokeman as of Turchill the high sheriff. If it was a humble origin, its humility was of such ancient date that it became distinction. Turchill of the thirty acres was like Adam, or Paris, or David. In the long line of the Turchills whose bones were lying in the vaults below Hawksyard Church there had been men distinguished in the field, the church, and the law; men who had fought

on sea and land; men who had won power in the state, and used it well, true alike to king and commons. But the ruck of the Turchills had been country squires like Edgar, and Edgar's father: men who farmed their own land and lived upon it, and who had no ambitions and few interests or desires beyond their native soil.

Hawksyard was a real moated grange. The house formed three sides of a quadrangle, with a heavily-buttressed garden wall for the fourth side. The water flowed all round the solid base of the building, a wide deep moat, wall stocked with pike and eels, carp and roach. The square inner garden was a prim parterre of the seventeenth century, and there was not a flower grew there more modern than Lord Bacon's day. This was a Turchill fancy. All the novelties and improvements in nineteenth-century horticulture might flourish in the spacious garden on the other side of the moat; but this little bit of ground within the grey old walls was a sacred enclosure, dedicated to the spirit of the past. Here the old yew-trees were clipped into peacocks. Here grew rosemary; lavender; periwinkle, white, purple, and blue; germander; flags; sweet marjoram; primroses; anemones; hyacinths; and the rare fritellaria; double white violets, which bloom in April and again at Bartholomew-tide; gilliflowers; sweet-briar; and the musk-rose. Here the brazen sun-dial, on its crumbling stone pedestal, reminded the passer-by that no man is always wise. Here soft mosses, like tawny velvet, crept over the grey wreckage of an abbey that had been destroyed soon after the Grange was built—the stone coffin of a mitred abbot; the crossed legs of a knightly crusader, with a headless heraldic dog at his feet. Here was the small circular fish-pond into which the last of the abbots was supposed to have pitched headforemost, and incontinently drowned himself, walking alone at midnight in a holy trance.

Mrs. Turchill was almost as fond as Edgar was of Hawksyard; but her affection took a thoroughly commonplace turn. She was not to the manner born. She had come to the Grange from a smart nineteenth-century villa, and, though she was very proud of the grave old house of which her husband had made her the mistress, her pride was mingled with an idea that Hawksyard was inconvenient, and that its old fashion was a thing to be apologised for and deprecated at every turn. Her chief

delight was in keeping her house in order ; and her servants were drilled to an almost impossible perfection in every duty appertaining to house-cleaning. Nobody's brasses, or oak floors, or furniture, or family plate, or pewter dinner-service, ever looked so bright as Mrs. Turchill's. Nowhere were windows so spotless ; nowhere was linen so exquisitely white, or of such satin-like smoothness. Mrs. Turchill lived for these things. When she was in London, or at the sea-side, she would be miserable on rainy days at the idea that Jane or Mary would leave the windows open, and that the brass fenders and fire-irons were all going to ruin.

Edgar spent a moony purposeless day, dawdling a good deal in the garden on the other side of the moat, where the long old-fashioned borders were full of tall white lilies and red moss-roses, vivid scarlet geranium, heliotrope and calceolaria : a feast of sweet scents and bright colours. There was a long and wide lawn without a flower-bed on it—a level expanse of grass ; and on the side opposite the flower border a row of good old mulberry and walnut trees ; then came a light iron fence, and a stretch of meadow land beyond it. There was no pretence of a park. There was not even a shrubbery, only that straight row of old trees, standing up out of the grass, with a gravel walk between them and the fence, across which Edgar used to feed and fondle his cows, or coax the shy brood mares and their foals to social intercourse.

He looked round his domain doubtfully to-day, wondering if it were good enough for Daphne, this poor table-land of a garden, a flat lawn, a long old-fashioned border crammed with homely flowers, the yew-tree arbour at the end of yonder walk. How poor a thing it seemed after South Hill, with its picturesque timber and lovely view, its broad terrace and sloping lawn, its rich variety of shrubs and conifers !

"It isn't because I am fond of the place that she would care for it," he told himself despondently. "I'm afraid there's nothing romantic or striking about it—except the moat. I'm glad she's so fond of water."

Edgar smoked a cigarette or two under the mulberry-trees, looked at his cows, talked to some of his men, and thus contrived to wear away time till the clock over the gateway struck five.

"Mother's tea-time. I'll go and have a cup with her," he said to himself.

Going out to dinner was a tremendous piece of business with Mrs. Turchill. She

was more serious and solemn about it, than a strictly modern lady would feel about going to be married. Even in an instance of this kind, where the dinner was supposed to be entirely unceremonious, a friendly little gathering arranged on the spur of the moment, she was still full of fuss and preparation. She had spent an hour in her bed-chamber before luncheon, arranging and discussing with her maid Deborah what gown she would, or would not, wear on the occasion : and this discussion involved a taking out and unfolding of all her dinner-gowns, and an offering of divers laces upon divers bodices, to see which went best with which. A review of this kind generally ended by a decision in favour of black velvet, or satin, or silk, or brocade, as the case might be ; Mrs. Turchill being much richer in gowns than in opportunities for wearing them.

"I always like myself best in black," she would say, with a glance at the reflection of her somewhat florid complexion in the Chippendale glass.

"You always look the lady in your velvet, mum," Deborah would answer sententiously.

Then after a day of quiet usefulness about her house the worthy matron would collect her energies over a leisurely cup of tea, and perhaps allow herself the refreshment of a nap after her tea, before she began the solemn business of the toilet.

The carriage had been ordered for a quarter-past seven, though it was but half an hour's drive to Arden Rectory, and at seven o'clock Mrs. Turchill was seated in the white parlour, in all the dignity of her velvet gown and point-lace cap, her hereditary amethysts, supposed to be second only to those once possessed by George the Third's virtuous consort, and her scarlet and gold Indian shawl. She was a comely matron, with a complexion that had never been damaged by cark or care, gas or late hours : a rosy-faced country-bred dame, with bright blue eyes, white teeth, and plentiful brown hair in which the silver threads were hardly visible.

Edgar was standing by the open window, just where he had stood in the morning with his gun, sorely perplexed as to the disposal of those fifteen minutes which had to be got through, before the most punctual of coachmen would bring the carriage to the door. The London papers were lying unheeded on the table ; but Edgar had felt very little interest of late

in the welfare of nations, or even in the last dreadful murder in Whitechapel.

"I hope my cap is right," said Mrs. Turchill anxiously.

"How could it be wrong, mother, when you've Deborah and your looking-glass, and have never been known to dress yourself in a hurry?"

"I disliked doing anything in a hurry, Edgar. It is against my principles. But I never feel sure about the set of my cap. I am afraid Deborah's eye is not quite correct, and a glass is dreadfully deceiving. I wish you'd look, Edgar, if it isn't too much trouble."

This was said reproachfully, as her son was kneeling on the window-seat staring idly down into the moat, as if he wanted to discover the whereabouts of an ancient pike that evaded him last year.

"My dear mother," he exclaimed, turning himself about to survey her, "to my eye—which may be no better than Deborah's—that lace arrangement which you call a cap appears mathematically exact, as precise as your own straight, honest mind. There's Dobson with the carriage. Come along, mother."

He led her out, established her comfortably in her own particular seat in the large laudau, and seated himself opposite to her with a beaming countenance.

"How happy you look, Edgar," said Mrs. Turchill, wondering at this unusual radiance. "One would think it were a novelty to you to dine out. Yet I am sure," somewhat plaintively, "you don't very often dine at home."

"The Rectory dinners are not to be despised, mother."

"Mrs. Ferrers is an excellent manager, and does everything very nicely; but as you don't care very much what you eat that would hardly make you so elated. I am rather surprised that you care about meeting Madoline and Mr. Goring so often," added Mrs. Turchill, who had not quite forgiven Lina for having refused to marry her son. That is the worst of making a confidant of a mother. She has an inconveniently long memory.

"I have nothing but kindly feelings for either of them," answered Edgar. "Don't you know the old song, mother. 'Shall I wasting in despair, die because a woman's fair?' I don't look much like wasting in despair, do I, old lady?"

"I should be very sorry to see you unhappy, Edgar; but I shall never love any wife of yours as well as I could have loved Madoline."

"Don't say that, mother. That's too hard on the future Mrs. Turchill!"

This was a curious speech from a youth who six months ago had protested that he should never marry. But perhaps this was only Edgar's fun. Mrs. Turchill shared the common delusion of mothers, and thought her son a particularly humorous young man.

What a sweetly Arcadian retreat Arden Rectory looked on this fair summer evening, and how savoury was the odour of a sole au gratin which blended with the flowery perfumes of the low-panelled hall! The guests had wandered out through the window of the small drawing-room to the verandah and lawn in front of it. That long French window was a blot upon the architectural beauty of the half-timbered Tudor cottage, but it was very useful for circulation between drawing-room and garden.

Mrs. Ferrers and Madoline were sitting under the verandah; Daphne was standing a little way off on the lawn, talking to the rector and Gerald Goring. She was speaking with intense animation, her face full of brightness. Edgar darted off to join this group, directly he had shaken hands with the two ladies, leaving his mother to subside into one of those new-fangled bamboo chairs, which, she felt assured, would leave its basket-work impression on her velvet gown.

"Edgar," cried Daphne as he came towards her, "did you ever hear of such a heathen—a man born on the soil—a very pagan?"

"Who is the culprit?" asked Edgar; "and what has he done?"

"Mr. Goring has never seen Ann Hathaway's cottage."

"I don't believe he knew who Ann Hathaway was till we told him," said the rector, with his fat laugh.

"And he has ridden and driven through Shottery hundreds of times, and he never stopped to look at the cottage where Shakespeare—the most wonderful man in the whole world—wooded and won his wife."

"I have heard it dimly suggested that she wooded and won him," remarked Gerald placidly; "she was old enough."

"You are too horrid!" cried Daphne. "Would you be surprised to hear that Americans cross the Atlantic—three thousand miles of winds and waves and sea-sickness—on purpose to see Stratford-on-Avon, and Shottery, and Wilmcote, and Snitterfield?"

"I could believe anything of a Yankee," answered Gerald, unmoved by these reproaches. "But why Wilmcote? why Snitterfield? They are as poky little settlements as you could find in any agricultural district."

"Did you ever hear of such hideous ignorance?" cried Daphne, "and in a son of the soil. You are most unworthy of the honour of having been raised in Shakespeare's county. Why John Shakespeare was born at Snitterfield; and Mary Arden lived with her father at Wilmcote; and it was there he courted her."

"John—Mary—oh, distant relations of the poet's, I suppose?" enquired Gerald easily.

"This is revolting!" exclaimed Daphne; "but he is shamming—he must be shamming."

"Punish him for his ignorance, whether it is real or pretended," cried Edgar. "Make him row us all down to Stratford to-morrow morning, and then we'll walk him over to Shottery, and make him give a new gown to the nice old woman who keeps the cottage."

"A new gown," echoed Daphne contemptuously; "he ought to be made to give her a cow—a beautiful mouse-coloured Channel Island cow."

"I'll give her anything you like, as long as you don't bore me to death about Shakespeare. I hate sights and lions of all kinds. I went through Frankfort without looking at the house where Goethe was born."

"A depraved desire to be singular," said the rector. "I think he ought to forfeit a cow to Mrs. Baker. Rhoda, my love," glancing furtively at his watch, "our friends are all here. Todd is usually more punctual."

Mrs. Ferrers, Lina, and Mrs. Turchill had strolled out to join the others. The prim rustic matron was looking at Daphne with astonishment rather than admiration. She was pretty, no doubt. Mrs. Turchill had never seen a more transparent complexion, or lovelier eyes: but there was a reckless vivacity about the girl's manner which horrified the thoroughly British matron.

"Daphne," said Edgar, "I hope you haven't forgotten my mother. Mother, this is Daphne."

Mrs. Turchill drew back a pace or two with extreme deliberation, and sank gracefully in the curtsy which she had been taught by the Leamington dancing-master

—an undoubted Parisian—five-and-thirty years ago. After the curtsy she extended her hand, and allowed Daphne to shake it.

"Come, Mrs. Turchill," said the rector, offering his arm. "Goring, bring Miss Lawford; Turchill will take care of my wife; and Daphne"—he paused, smiling at the fair young face and slender girlish figure in soft white muslin—"Daphne shall have my other arm, and sit on my left hand. I feel there is a bond of friendship between us, now that I find she is so fond of Shakespeare."

"I'm afraid I know Hamlet's soliloquies better than I do my duty to my neighbour," said Daphne, on the way to the dining-room, remembering how the rector used to glower at her under his heavy brows when she broke down in that portion of the Church Catechism.

Mrs. Ferrers, from her opposite seat at the oval table, had a full view of her husband's demeanour across the roses, and maiden-hair ferns, and old Derby crimson and purple dessert dishes. It was rather trying to her to see that he devoted himself entirely to Daphne during the pauses of the meal: and that, while he, as in duty bound, provided for all Mrs. Turchill's corporal needs, and was solicitous that she should do ample justice to his wines and his dishes, he allowed her mind to starve upon the merest scraps of speech dropped into her ear at long intervals.

Nor was Edgar much better behaved to Mrs. Ferrers, for he sank into such a slough of despond at finding himself separated from Daphne, that his conversational resources ran suddenly dry, and Rhoda's lively enquiries about the plays and pictures he had just been seeing elicited only the humiliating fact that she, who had not seen them, knew a great deal more about them than he who had.

"What did you think of the Millais landscape?" she asked.

"Was there a landscape by Millais? I thought he was a portrait painter."

This looked hopeless, but she tried again.

"And Frith's picture; you saw that of course."

"No, I didn't," he replied, brightening; "but I saw the people looking at it. It was immensely good, I believe. There was a railing, and a policeman to make the people move on. My mother was delighted. She and another lady trod on each other's gowns in their eagerness to get at the picture. I believe they would have come to blows, if it hadn't been for the policeman."

"And there was Miss Thompson's picture."

"Yes; and another crowd. That is the sort of picture mother enjoys. I think the harder the struggle is the better she likes the picture."

Gerald and Madoline were sitting side by side, talking as happily as if they had been in Eden. All the world might have heard their conversation—there were no secrets, there was no exchange of confidences—and yet they were as far away from the world about them, and as completely out of it, as if they had been in the planet Venus, rising so calmly yonder above the willows, and sending one tremulous arrow of light deep down into the dark brown river. For these two Mrs. Todd's most careful achievements were as nothing: her sole au gratin might have been served with horse-radish sauce, or fried onions; her vol-au-vent might have been as heavy as suet-pudding; her blanquette might have been bill-sticker's paste; her soufflé might have been flavoured with peppermint instead of vanilla; and they would hardly have discovered that there was anything wrong.

And what delight it was by-and-by to wander out into the cool garden, leaving the rector to prose to poor Edgar over his Chambertin, and to lose themselves in the shadowy shrubbery, where the perfume of broom and mock orange seemed intensified by the darkness. Daphne sat in the quaint old candle-lit drawing-room, conversing with the two matrons: Aunt Rhoda inclined to lecture; Mrs. Turchill inclined to sleepiness, having eaten a more elaborate dinner than she was used to, and feeling an uncomfortable tightness in the region of her velvet waist-band.

Edgar got away from the rector as soon as he decently could, and came to the relief of the damsel.

"Well, mother, how are you and Daphne getting on?" he asked cheerily. "I hope you have made her promise to come to see you at Hawksyard."

Mrs. Turchill started from semi-somnolence, and her waist-band gave a little creak.

"I shall be delighted if Madoline will bring her sister to call on me some day," she replied stiffly, addressing herself to nobody in particular.

"Call on you—some day! What an invitation!" cried Edgar. "Why, mother, what has become of your old-fashioned hospitality? I want Daphne to come and stay with you, and to run about the house

with you, and help you in your dairy and poultry-yard—and—get used to the place."

Get used to the place! Why should Daphne get used to the place? For what reason was a fair-haired chit in a white frock suddenly projected upon Mrs. Turchill's cows and poultry—cows as sacred in her mind as if she had been a Hindoo; poultry which she only allowed the most trusted of her dependents to attend upon. She felt a sudden sinking of the heart, which was much worse than after-dinner tightness. Could it be that Edgar, her cherished Edgar, was going to throw himself away upon such a frivolous chit as this: a mere school-girl, without the slightest pretention to deportment.

Daphne, all this time, sat in a low basket-chair by the open window, and looked up at Edgar with calm friendly eyes—eyes which were at least without guile when they looked at him.

SWALLOWED BY THE SEA.

SHAKESPEARE tells us "The sea's a thief," and our experience fully corroborates him. Our coasts have been thoroughly ravaged by the relentless force of this powerful element, and many are the towns and villages that have fallen victims to its insatiable maw. No doubt the sea has always been washing away our crumbling cliffs, and many traditions still linger of ancient cities, and vast tracts of land, for ever buried beneath the wave. Let us recount a few.

Dunlop, in his *History of Fiction*, referring to Sir Lancelot du Lac, says: "The country of Leonais or Leonnoys, of which Meliadus was king, and which was the birth-place of Tristan, though once contiguous to Cornwall, has now disappeared, and is said to be forty fathoms under water." Again, Carew, in his *Survey of Cornwall*, referring to the same subject, informs us that it is thirteen miles from the Scilly Isles, and all buried under the water, except a rock which can be seen at low tide. It is said that the fishermen there occasionally bring up pieces of doors and windows! One of the legends current in Llandudno and the neighbourhood is, that the part between Aber and Penmaenmawr, and in the direction of Great Ormes Head, now covered by the sea, was once a "delicate vale abounding in fruitfulness." The credulous fancy can detect the traces of ancient building foundations. The place was called *Llys Helig* (The Court of Helig),

and the sands are now called Traeth Lafan, which latter word is supposed to be a corruption of *wylofain* (wailing). The story is that Helig held a large court-feast, and, in the revelry, the watchmen forgot to close the sea-gate, so that the whole district was inundated through their negligence. This event was said to have been prophesied for generations, vengeance having been threatened to the family of Helig ap Glenawg for the crimes of his ancestors. Another tradition is referred to by the Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer in his excellent little book, *English Folk-Lore*. He states that the cemetery of a place called Kilgrimal once stood on the sands near Blackpool, and that wanderers near the spot had been terrified by the "dismal chimes of the bells pealing over the murmuring sea." According to the Norfolk Garland, a similar superstition prevails in Nottinghamshire, where the people of Raleigh believe that, several hundreds of years ago, the valley adjacent was caused by an earthquake, and a church and village were swallowed up at the same time. They confidently place their ears to the ground on Christmas morning, "hoping to catch the music of the mysterious chimes in the subterranean temples." They actually do hear bells ring, but they are those of a neighbouring village church, the sounds being carried along the ground. About half a mile west of Thrunscoe, in Lincolnshire, there is a place called Church Well, where the church of this village is said to be sunk; another, called the West Well, is supposed to have been caused at the same time by an earthquake about the 8th of September, 1692; church bells are trustfully listened for here on Christmas Day.

On the coast of Yorkshire, from Flam-borough Head to Spurn Point, the damage done by the sea for ages has been very extensive: Professor Phillips estimates the loss of land at the rate of about two and a quarter yards per year on an average. Many villages have been washed from its shores, which are now forgotten. On some of our old maps we may read such items as "Hartburn, washed away by the sea;" "Hyde, lost in the sea;" "Here stood Auburn, which was washed away by the sea." The Rev. R. Wilton, M.A., has composed a graceful little poem on the latter place. It is said that the ruins of Auburn are still to be seen opposite Auburn House. Bridlington Quay has been subjected to many ravages; in 1837, after stormy weather, the whole was a scene of ruin, houses being destroyed, and the north pier severed from

the land. Houses have frequently been taken down to save them from being swept into the sea. Seventeen or eighteen hundred years ago we are told that a Roman villa of great proportions stood on Filey Bay (their *Felix Portus*); how much remains of it now? Within the last twenty years Professor Phillips tells us of the discovery of the traces of a building on the very edge of the cliff, rudely paved, with corner-stones morticed in the middle for upright posts; a central stone; the floor covered from a foot to a foot and a half deep with the bones of animals used for food; a great amount of pottery, nearly all Roman; coins; and many other things, showing it to have been a large residence luxuriously kept, possibly part of a *prætorium*.

A street called Hornsea Beck, near Hornsea, has long disappeared.

Outhorne is another departed village. In 1828 its churchyard remained with only one tombstone, which the sea soon claimed for its own. The following places have perished with it at different periods: Salte-hagh, Tharlesthorpe or Thorlesthorpe, Fris-merk or Frismark, Wythefleet, Dymelton, Redmayr or Redmayre, Pennysmerk or Pennysmark, Upsal, Pottersfleet, and Kiln-sea. At the latter place stood a cross, said to have been first erected at Ravenspurne to commemorate the landing of Henry the Fourth in 1399; but it was removed to Burton Constable in 1818, and re-erected at Hedon in 1832; it still adorns the beautiful grounds of Mr. Watson, Hedon. Half of Kilnsea Church fell in 1826, and ten years later the village was removed.

On the coast of Lincolnshire, the ravages of the sea, though not extensive, have still been very considerable. From Grimsby to Skegness there are still many visible vestiges of a submarine forest. Dugdale, however, attributes its submersion to an earthquake. Itterby, Owle, and Clee Ness were so despoiled and flooded, that they originated the local term, "Gone to Humber."

At Thrunscoe, a church, village, and seven hundred acres of land are said to have disappeared. The old town of Saltfleet is also said to have been destroyed by the sea, and, near the low water mark, stones have been found which seemed to have belonged to a church. About sixty years ago a fisherman drew up a large bell-clapper in the meshes of his net. At Stain in Mablethorpe, St. Peter's Church and the greater part of its parish were carried away by the sea several centuries ago; and its rectory, valued in K.B. at seven pounds ten shil-

lings and twopence, was consolidated with Theddlethorpe St. Helen's in 1745. The original church of the village of Trusthorpe is said to have been washed away by the sea three and a half centuries ago. Near Sutton-in-the-Marsh and Huttoft, there are again distinct traces of a submarine forest; at the former place a great part of St. Clement's is said to have been washed away centuries ago with its original church. At the lowest ebbs of the tide a great number of islets and decayed trees may be seen. When the late Sir Joseph Banks examined these islets—or clay huts as they are sometimes called—the people told him that their ancestors could discern the ruins of the old church at very low water.

At Addlethorpe and Mablethorpe traces of a submarine forest are especially visible. Birch, fir, and oak are the trees which are the most distinguishable; the soil in which they are fixed and in which they grew is a soft greasy clay, above which is a stratum of decayed leaves and other vegetable matter several inches thick. Dr. de Serra agrees with Dugdale in attributing the overwhelming of this forest to an earthquake, considering it impossible for the trees and shrubs found upon it to vegetate so near the sea, and below the common level of the water. Another writer, however, suggests that it was probably embanked in from the sea by the Romans, and that after some centuries it was again overflowed owing to the decay of the banks for want of repairs, and the accumulation of silt, which enriches and protects the marshes on the shores of the Wash. Leland says of Skegness, it was once a great "haven town," with a castle and surrounding wall, but it was "clene consumed and eten up with the se."

In digging a well at Sutton it was found that the upper stratum of clay, accumulated by the deposit of the tides, was sixteen feet thick, resting on a moory soil, similar to that in which the trees of the submerged forest are found. Canoes have been found near the bed of the Witham, and in the sandy valleys between Gainsborough and Barton. Another account says that Boston and the neighbourhood must at one time have been sixteen or eighteen feet lower than at present, and so sound and dry that large timber trees grew on it, the roots and trunks of which have often been dug up in many parts of Lincolnshire.

The ancient port of Ravenser has shared the general fate, as also the little island near it, thrown up by the sea, called "Odd," or Ravenser-od. These flourished during

the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, after which they decayed. The orthography of the place has been very changeable; the following are some of its appellations: Ravenser, Old Ravenser, Ravensrode, Ravenspurne, Ravenspurgh, Ravenspurn, Ravenspur, Ravensburg, Ravenspur, and Ravensrodd. While it flourished, Hull was growing in importance to the detriment of Hedon. It stood opposite to Clec, and only a short distance from it, and was sheltered by Spurn Head, it being about mid-Humber. It is said to have been built by William de Fortiter, Earl of Albemarle, on the mud and stone collected at the mouth of the Humber. In 1305, it sent members to the Parliament of thirty-third Edward the First with Hedon; also in 1326, the twentieth Edward the Second; and in 1328, the second of Edward the Third. It was consulted on naval affairs by the king in 1344. Leland says: "In Richard the Second's days the town of Hull waxed very rich;" in 1298, when Hull and Ravenser presented petitions to Edward the First for privileges, the former offered the gift of one hundred marks, and the latter of three hundred. In 1332, Edward Baliol sailed from here to invade Scotland. From the frequent inundations in 1346, the merchants removed to Hull, and the dead were transferred to Easington, and in 1357 very little of the port remained. In 1399, however, Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford (afterwards King Henry the Fourth), landed here from France, and found Matthew Danthorp, a hermit priest, engaged in building an oratory without royal permission. As Henry the Fourth, he confirmed him in his possession, with the rights of wreck and waif for its maintenance, and other profits of the shore, except the chief lord's "royal" fishes, for two leagues round the place for ever. Richard Reedbarrow, another hermit, built a tower here in 1428; the first lighthouse, or "beken," at the entrance of the Humber. By the Chartulary of Meaux, Ravenser was accessible from Easington by a road on the pebbly beach.

From Thompson's History of Holderness, Wm. Worcester's Annals of England, and Stow's Chronicle, we find that the Dukes of Hereford and Lancaster arrived at Ravenspur to meet the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, and other discontented nobles, for the purpose of deposing King Richard the Second, who had taken refuge in Ireland. This was in 1399, about the feast of St. John the

Baptist, and they rode by Bristol, &c. The sword Henry wore on landing there is still carried at a coronation, and called the "Sword of Lancaster."

Shakespeare mentions Ravenspurgh eight times.

According to Lyell, at Sheringham, on the coast of Norfolk, there is now a depth of twenty feet of water, where forty-eight years ago there stood a cliff fifty feet high, with houses upon it. The ancient villages of Shipden, Wimpwell, and Ecoles have been lost. The site of ancient Cromer is now a part of the German Ocean, the inhabitants having gradually retreated inland to the present town.

In Suffolk, at Dunwich, once the largest seaport on the coast, the loss has been very great. Monasteries, churches, and public buildings have at different times been destroyed, including four hundred houses at once. The town is now reduced to a small village, with about two hundred inhabitants.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth, Brighton, in Sussex, stood where the chain-pier now stretches into the sea. Part of the town was destroyed in 1665, and in 1703 and 1705 the remainder was overwhelmed, consisting of one hundred and thirteen houses.

Referring again to Cornwall, old historians mention a tradition of a tract of land extending from the Land's End to the Scilly Isles, a distance of thirty miles; but this can hardly be credited, as the sea is now three hundred feet deep at the same place. St. Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, now an island, is said to have been situated in a wood several miles from the sea; in fact, its old Cornish name means the "Hoare Rock in the Wood." Under the sands, between the mount and the mainland, may be found black vegetable mould, containing hazel nuts, and the branches, roots, and leaves of forest trees, giving some ground for the belief.

There are many more similar traditions on the Continent, and elsewhere, where the sea "rages horribly."

The poet Uhland refers to one of these in *Die Verlorne Kirche*, thus translated:

Oft in the forest far one hears
A passing sound of distant bells;
Not legends old nor human wit
Can tell us whence the music swells.
From the lost church 'tis thought that soft
Faint ringing cometh on the wind;
Once many pilgrims trod the path,
But no one now the way can find.

There is also a poem entitled *Das Versunkene Kloster*, which commences:

Ein Kloster ist versunken
Tief in dem wilden See.

THE STAGE JEWEL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

SHE never would tell us whence she came. To this hour I have never known her real name. She called herself "La Misa," which is no name at all, for our trumpeter, who had married an Italian woman, remembered on hearing it that the peasants in Italy call their cats by that name, as we in England call them "Pussy." And sure enough there was something feline and tigresish in those cruel dark brown eyes, which seemed fiercely black when shaded by the long eyelashes, and of a lurid orange-colour where the light fell upon them. Jack Hall asked her one day in his poor dilapidated Italian why she had chosen to be known by such a name, and he was quite frightened at the ferocious manner in which she answered: "Because it was given me by those who know me better than you will ever do."

At first my husband did not take kindly to the dirty little foreign girl, as he called her. When she arrived I was sitting with him in his private office, waiting patiently till he had finished his pipe to walk home with him to our humble lodging. John was rather in an irritable mood. It was a cold winter's day, and the fog was beginning to rise, and penetrating into the dark damp passages which led from the muddy street into the interior of the theatre, made them as full of dirty slop as the highway itself. It was hard to distinguish the features of the girl in the dim light thrown on one side by the choked-up casement and on the other by our scanty fire. But a glance sufficed to show that she was poorly clad, not over clean, and that she was small and insignificant in stature. From below the brim of her shabby hat flowed down a mass of coal-black hair—curls, braids, straight dark meshes, all together in confusion without more attempt at style or coiffure than if she had just been caught in the woods; and John, who, as I have said before, was not in the best of tempers at that moment, did not even turn round to speak to her, but after one glance resumed his idle attitude with his elbows resting on his knees as he bent low over the fire, leaving as usual the burthen of the business portion of the affair entirely on my hands. It was I then who had to question her concerning her capability, as to what parts she had been accustomed to play, and how long she could continue standing on one toe, holding

the rose-branch, while the elves and fairies it had conjured up were executing their merry round.

The girl laughed scornfully, and tossed her curls as if to the winds, as she answered that she had been accustomed to stand for many minutes at a time, while her betters were encored, and encored again, in their never-ending steps before her. Then followed a long catalogue of other questions, until at last we came to that of the salary, when I observed that the matter must be left to my husband, and that the amount would depend entirely on his acceptance and his liking; and then the girl tossed her head again, and shook her curls more scornfully than before, and said in a low, hissing whisper: "If it depends on his liking, there is no fear of his acceptance." The answer was so strangely rude that I could not help feeling a little piqued, and was about to reply; but the words died away upon my tongue, and my thoughts were instantly thrown with sudden violence into another channel. My husband had gradually turned round in his chair, and was gazing intently at the stranger with an expression I have never forgotten, and never shall forget. There was admiration—I was sure of this—and approval of what she had been saying, and the sweet soft smile of sympathy and interest; and as he gazed, as if drawn towards her by a fascination inexplicable even to himself, he gradually rose from his seat and stood upright, then turning his back to the fire remained confronting her.

At that moment a pang to which I could give no name, for I had never felt the like before, shot through my brain, and I actually gasped for breath, as, endeavouring to command my voice to calmness, I appealed to John. He did not reply at once, but seemed as if wishing first to take in the whole aspect of the new comer before he spoke, and when he did speak, I fancied his voice was different in tone to anything that I had ever heard from his lips. The conditional terms were soon settled, while I stood as in a dream, scarcely comprehending what was going on around me. Before I had even the time to put in my word of objection to the conditions, which I thought onerous, both my husband and the girl had disappeared. They had gone together to the theatre to examine the resources of the stage, and I remained alone in the dreary little office—alone with that strange pang eating into my heart: a pang never

expected, never dreaded, a pang to which I could give no name. I glanced at myself in the looking-glass over the mantel-piece. By the dim firelight within, and the growing twilight without, I beheld my own wan faded countenance, faded and worn by overtaking my strength in my husband's service, and yet even I could compare it with advantage with that of the girl who had just arrived, like some malicious elf, to destroy that confidence in my husband's love I had felt till now. My brow was marked by the hard lines of trouble and perplexity, but hers was brown and weather-beaten; my hair was getting thin and lank about my temples, but was not hers rough and unkempt, nay, almost offensive in its matted thickness? My eyes were no longer bright as they once had been, but they were honest and truthful, and soft and loving in their expression, whilst hers were hard and cruel and defiant. And, as I turned from the contemplation, I persuaded myself that John could not prefer this dark-complexioned little stranger to me, the faithful wife who had loved and helped him through all his troubles, and who had sacrificed the youth, the very flower of her life, her home, her station in society, to her love for him. No, no; I must be a perfect fool to dream of such a possibility, and I laughed hysterically as the memory of Mrs. Bates's numerous examples of The Jealous Wife and Fatal Errors came across my mind and warned me to preserve my faith and trust in John, and not to suffer my imagination to lead me into absurdity; and then I left the office and hurried home to get supper ready, prepare the fire, air John's dressing-gown, and place his slippers on the fender as was my wont. So I got everything in order, and, having fetched his pint of ale, sat patiently to wait for John's return from the theatre. He did not come home till late, and—he did not come alone! The miserable little foreign girl was his companion! John stammered out some excuse to me, it is true—the fatigue of the girl's journey from London; the impossibility of allowing the young lady to go in search of lodgings at that late hour; the discredit such application for admittance at any of the little inns so long after dark would bring upon the company belonging to the theatre, which, John said, he was resolved to keep free from all scandal and cause of gossip; and, of course, ending with demonstrating the urgent necessity of her

remaining with us for the night. All this would have been plausible enough had the subject of the difficulty been any other than this little tawny black-browed stranger; but the case seemed almost too hard for me to bear, and when, bending beneath the load of the shake-down I was compelled to arrange for her in the closet in the parlour, and fetching and carrying the different articles necessary for her comfort, and then cooking over the fire the additional beefsteak for supper, and they all the while sitting together quite cosily by the hearth talking in confidential whispers, heeding me no more than if I had been their menial servant, I wept outright with wounded pride and vexation. And yet their whispering was audible enough whenever I drew near; they did not seek to lower their voices or disguise the subject of their talk. It was all about the pantomime; the costume she was to wear as the fairy queen; the peculiar music she insisted on having played by the orchestra, which of course was to be entirely different from that already rehearsed by me. She was not gay or merry in her speech; she was not coquettish in her manner with John, for she sat all crouched up together, her knees almost touching her chin, her feet upon the fender, combing her hair with her fingers (the only combing it ever had, I thought), and now and then varying the amusement by biting her thumb-nails with fierce impatience whenever any contradiction occurred on John's part or any opposition to her wishes.

The supper passed off in tolerable harmony. I was tired and weary, and soon was the strange girl laid upon her mattress in the dark cupboard of the parlour, and the house locked up and all apparently in repose. But the excitement of the evening had been too much for me, besides which I was really ill and could not sleep, but lay thinking of all kinds of things, sometimes falling into an uneasy doze, and dreaming of the stranger and the stage jewel, and always tearing it from her grasp, and sometimes wrenching it with such violence that her hands were torn and scratched, and she held them up all bleeding to drive me away. It was after one of these attacks of nightmare that I awoke so completely that I did not care to go to sleep again, but sat up in bed listening to John's regular breathing. Merrington was still an old-fashioned place, and, like most of the remote towns in Lincolnshire,

retained the old-fashioned customs of bygone generations. The watchman still paraded its streets at night, disturbing the silence at intervals by his hoarse calling of the hour; and just when he passed by, calling out, "Past twelve o'clock and a cloudy morning," I was startled by another sound, which seemed like the creaking of the door of the cupboard wherein I had spread the stranger's mattress, and before I had time to wonder at the cause of the disturbance, I heard—and this time the sound was distinct—the cautious dragging of the old mahogany table over the carpet, and then the same muffled sound of the dragging another heavy object from one side of the room to the other. It was John's great armchair, which squeaked as it moved along. Presently, to my amazement, I was aware of a gleam of light through the keyhole, and, struck with a sudden terror of I knew not what, I rose, and opening the door a few inches, peeped through. The mattress had been half drawn from the cupboard, the pillow thrown in one corner of the room, and the bolster coiled up in the other. I scarcely had time to wonder at the purport of this strange arrangement, for my whole attention was presently called away towards the girl. There she stood, half-dressed, that odious little foreign girl. Across her bosom she had thrown my own lovely rose-coloured scarf, and tied it in a fanciful knot upon one shoulder, showing the bronzed gipsy-tint of her neck and bosom. Her hair—that marvellous mass of tangled coal-black floss-silk—was hanging down on each side of her face in long strings and covering her back like a thick mourning veil, falling below her waist. She was standing before the little looking-glass which I had placed upon the chimney of the parlour for her accommodation; and, just as I looked through the crevice of the door, she was in the very act of taking the stage jewel from the pincushion where my husband had deposited it, and was examining it with admiration by the light of the tallow candle on the mantel-piece. She gazed at it fondly, then rubbed it gently, and then placed it in her hair, trying the effect of its brightness, first upon her forehead, then upon her bosom, and finally on her shoulder, where the knot of the scarf with its fringed ends formed a rosette. The experiment was evidently successful in this case, for she nodded her head approvingly, and gave another glance sideways at the glass. She then withdrew backwards on

the point of her toes to the opposite wall of the little room, and, standing tiptoe on the pillow, suddenly, with a bound like that of the hungry panther, she sprang across the space between the door and the window, alighting on the edge of the mattress with the marvellous flying step I had sometimes seen imitated by some of the broken-down pantomime dancers, brought by old age, accident, or drunkenness to the low level of our strolling company after having been on the London boards. But with this stranger girl it was not the mere timid imitation of the thing, the fixing of the mere idea of how it could be done—it was the thing itself. I saw the reason now of the precaution taken with the bed-gear—to deaden the shock of her footstep as it alighted from the height of the spring she took. Then came the long, bending, elastic step over the floor, like a bird about to take flight; then the leap, sudden, yet graceful beyond measure; and she went on from one wild bounding spring to another, counting steadily all the while, "One, two, three," giving between each utterance the little clap in her hands and the smart fillip with her finger and thumb each time she took her leap. I stood looking on so amazed, so completely overcome by her wonderful grace and agility, that for a moment I forgot all cause of bitterness against her, and gazed on her movements with as much interest and admiration as though she had been my dearest and most beloved friend, instead of the mortal enemy she must be fated to become. I watched her until the watchman's hoarse tones were heard again beneath the window shouting forth, "Past one o'clock, and a misty morning." The sound aroused me from the trance in which I was still standing there, with my feet aching, and my whole frame shivering with cold. As if she, too, had been startled at the cry, she immediately stopped in one of her boldest pirouettes, listened attentively in the direction of the door at which I was standing, then hurriedly divesting herself of the scarf and the jewel, she readjusted her dress, then tossed back her hair. She replaced the jewel on the cushion, but not till after she had once more examined it as attentively and with the same fond admiration as before. I slunk back again to bed like a guilty thing, but got no more sleep that night; the image of that rival rose continually before my eyes and bade me despair, and I lay till morning burning with fever and

shivering with jealousy and rage, while John slept on—all unconscious of ill—calmly and quietly by my side. I never mentioned a word of this scene to John. I could not bring myself to speak to him in praise of the strange new girl, and loved to hear the doubts he was continually expressing as to her fitness for the part she was to perform.

CHAPTER III.

THE night of the reopening of the Merrington Theatre under its new lessee and manager arrived at length. All the day long did my husband hurry backwards and forwards, to and from the theatre—ordering—commanding—superintending—forbidding—preventing—in short, indulging in all the privileges so dear to the actor's soul. I was kept to the house in order to be in readiness for any emergency, and could not choose but feel myself reduced in consequence, diminished in rank as it were, and forced to yield my place to the new rival sent up from London. John was right; the prospect of the new pantomime, with "La Misa, a new dancer from London, who would replace Mrs. Monteagle, prevented by indisposition from appearing," had awakened the sleepy population to something like curiosity. The mayor and his lady, the town clerk and his lady, and all the high dignitaries of the place, had taken tickets, and even before the opening of the doors the treasury was proclaimed to be in the most prosperous condition. John was bent on playing first fiddle—Romeo, of course, with a Juliet of whom I could not feel the least jealousy: a tall raw-boned Scotch lassie who fulfilled to the letter that first requirement in the eyes of the manager of not being too attractive while he was on the stage. After the pantomime—Orynthia, or the Queen of the Mountain Elves—John was to appear alone upon the stage and speak a poetical composition of his own upon the characters of Shakespeare's plays, and to recite a short speech in each of the characters. I had taken more than usual pride in the dressing and adornment of my Romeo that night, and, as I fastened the jewel in his cap, the memory of Farmer Benson's barn and of the influence which the bauble had exercised over my destiny came back upon me with overwhelming power, and in sheer absence of mind I lingered over it as I had done on that night, and breathed upon it, and brushed and rubbed it with unwonted tenderness and love, and all the while it

seemed to wink at me as it did the first time I had beheld it, and I turned it to the light and caressed it as I had done once before.

The play was, however, but a secondary consideration for the people of Merrington on that night. The pantomime was all. And when the green curtain fell upon the unhappy lovers there was a shout of joy from the audience which took the shape of a burst of applause, but no recall nor expression of approval. The first scene of the fairy piece was listened to with great attention. I stood behind the scenes within view of the stage, sad and wretched—dreading the success of La Misa, yet hating myself for my unworthiness in harbouring such a feeling. With the vulture of jealousy still gnawing at my heart, I went to the dressing-closet where La Misa was attiring. It was an actual cupboard—nothing more—parted by rough deal planks from the passage which ran behind the upper gallery, and scarcely wide enough for the actress to turn or stretch her arms to their full extent while the door remained closed. There could be no furniture within, and the rush-bottomed chair with the wooden box on which was placed the looking-glass, and which served to hold the rouge-pot and powder-box, constituted the whole adornment of the miserable little place. The rough planks were not even papered; only a few nails here and there serving to hang the dress and cloak of the occupant. Provision against fire had been made, by placing the iron sconces, containing the two homely tallow candles allowed by the management, at a certain height and out of danger. The dressing-room allotted to my own use was situated conveniently enough behind the scenes on a level with the stage, of ample dimensions and decently furnished; but my refusal to lend it to La Misa was resolute and peremptory. I did not often oppose my husband's wish, but, when I did, he was invariably compelled to yield.

The Queen of the Fairies came on at length. A silence fell upon the audience; something like disappointment was experienced, I thought, and my heart rejoiced. So much had been said in Merrington about the dancer from London, that there could be no wonder that such should have been the case. She was ill-attired in the spangled property skirt which had already been altered for me, and which I would not consent to have shortened save by a

temporary tuck, for I was obstinate in my refusal to acknowledge that I had done for ever with the stage, and talked about replacing La Misa at an early opportunity; when, alas! I knew well enough that my career upon the boards was at an end, for my cough was getting worse every day, and the pain in my side forced me to bend forward even in walking. But although her personal appearance had evidently been unfavourable, there was no resisting the magnetism of her movements. The very gesture with which she summoned with the rose-branch wand the troop of fairy elves hidden in the mountain side was sufficient to arouse that artistic fibre which, let critics carp as they will, is always found to exist in the mass of the public. And so went on for the little, fallow, insignificant creature a success increasing until it came to a climax in the transformation-scene, where she appeared light and buoyant to dance by moonlight on the edge of the fairy lake, then to be borne away in a silver bark drawn by silver swans. Here was beheld the irresistible and overwhelming effect of boldness and audacity. Never before had Merrington beheld such leaps, such bounds, as those displayed by La Misa! Her hair, loosened from the bonds which had held it, seemed to follow her as it were, to turn when she turned, to skim the air when she glided along the boards; while the rose-coloured scarf floated like a cloud over the whole figure, seeming to veil it from the raw glare of the gaslight, and softening it to the effect of a tinted vapour.

Stage accidents are more frequent than the public are ever made aware of. They are covered by the skill of the performer or by a comrade's help, and one of these slight accidents happened to La Misa just as she was in the midst of one of her boldest flights. The scarf had somehow become loosened from her shoulder, and was dropping down her skirt. In another moment it would have slipped beneath her feet, when she might have fallen flat upon her face. I was standing close to the stage, and maddened though I was by jealousy, my own womanly instinct taught me kindness, and I stooped forward and caught the scarf as it fell, releasing the foot which was already becoming entangled in its folds. She scarcely thanked me when she came to rest at the wing, but tore the scarf hurriedly from my hand, and asked me for a pin to fasten it upon her shoulder.

so that the same accident might not occur again when she came to execute the grand coda of her step. I was offended at the peremptory manner in which she addressed me, for I forgot the hurry and haste of the moment, the panting breathless state to which a dancer is reduced after the exertion to which she has been compelled; but John, who was standing by, suddenly snatched the jewel from the Romeo cap, and in trembling haste affixed it to the scarf exactly as La Misa herself had done on the night when I had watched her in our lodging. I did not hear the tender words with which the action was accompanied, but I felt sure he must have uttered them; and my lips, all pale and quivering, muttered them to myself as though I had overheard every syllable, while my limbs trembled beneath me, so that I was obliged to catch hold of John's arm. But he shook me off without notice, eager like all the others to rush to the spot where a glimpse could be obtained of La Misa, and left me there alone.

Again did La Misa whirl and leap and bound, to the front, to the back, and now to each side of the stage, even close to the very place where I stood glaring at John's delighted countenance with feelings of hate and rage such as I had never felt before. She passed me by in triumphant pride as call after call summoned her to the footlights. But when she pushed by me, pressing me out of sight as though I had been some noxious insect in her path, whispering to John as she went, and pointing meanwhile to the jewel on her shoulder, said to him, although I felt that her words were directed to me: "Thank you, Mr. Manager—thank you heartily. I know it is this which has brought me all this luck, and I know it will bring me fame." She pointed to the jewel which held the scarf, and he answered aloud: "Well, then, you must wear it to-night at the supper we are to give you at the Magpie. My wife will not be able to come, and you must take her place." I could bear no more, but uttering a ferocious cry like that of the wounded tiger, I rushed upon La Misa, exclaiming, as I plucked at the scarf: "No, no! she shall not have it. It was never meant for such as she. It is mine—it is mine, for I have paid with my very life for the spell it first cast over me." But the scarf was torn to ribands in my hand, and in the light the jewel gleamed with the same lurid gleam it had worn the whole evening, while La Misa, as if deeming the

whole scene a mere playful jest on my part, laughed aloud as she bounded up the narrow back stair which led to her dressing closet, while I, gaining almost supernatural strength through my jealousy and despair, snatched up the little spirit-lamp which stood on a bracket against the wall, and rushed madly after her with almost as much agility as she herself displayed. No one was witness to that unearthly chase; the staircase and passages were deserted; the house was silent, listening to John's Shakespearian address. No one but myself could hear the mocking laugh with which La Misa sprang through the door of the dressing-closet, as it banged after her, nor the jeering exclamation with which she drew the bolt within. I actually shrieked with rage at the insult, and setting down my little lamp upon the floor, I turned with all my strength the key which had been left on the outside, saying as I did so: "Nay, this is better vengeance than I could have hoped for. You will not go to the supper at the Magpie at all to-night, my fine madam. Romeo's jewelled star shall belie its luck for once. It shall bring you neither luck nor fame!" She must have heard the threat, and it must have alarmed her, I thought, for my speech was answered by a sudden shriek which echoed to the very roof, but I was insensible to its awful meaning; it had not made me forget the mocking laugh with which the girl had closed the door, and my head was whirling round with the rushing noise and fierce velocity of a water-mill. I knew not where I was nor wherefore I had come there—I only knew that this wretched little interloper had sought to come between me and my husband's love, but that was what I was determined to prevent even at the cost of my very life. And this did I shout through the door as I flung myself on my knees upon the floor, holding the handle of the lock with all my might, although I knew well enough that it was secure. Presently, however, the scream was followed by another one more awful still, and now the loud cries of agony rose shrill and piercing, accompanied by the stamping of her feet, and loud battering on the door. I heard the bolt withdrawn, and the smothered tones of La Misa's voice as she hoarsely cried, "Let me out—let me out! Open the door, for pity's sake!" But it was my turn to triumph now, and I answered, in cruel irony: "No, no, La Misa; not till the supper is over at the Magpie. No, no; stay here, and wait awhile

for my place at the table as well as that you are seeking to take in my husband's heart." But—oh, God! how can I remember this and live?—before I had finished my speech I grew conscious of a sudden heat and sense of suffocation, while my eyes were blinded by a thin thread of curling smoke which came slowly through the fissure in the ill-joined planks of the door just above the lock! It was then that I too shrieked aloud, and used my frantic efforts to unlock the door myself. But the violence I had used had forced the lock, and the rusty key refused to move. How shall I ever tell the anguish which brought me to my senses? I saw it all—I saw it all. The flame of my lamp upon the floor had caught the trailing fragments of the thick gauze scarf which had been shut in the door, and hung fluttering through the gaping crevice of the jamb. The draught was strong and bitter through those narrow passages and winding stairs, and the flame had crept up the scarf unperceived by La Misa, until it had reached her bare arms and shoulders. She had tried in vain to tear it off. In less than a moment the frippery of the gauze and muslin of the skirt were all on fire! Now would I have given my very life to have saved La Misa from that awful doom to which my foul passion had condemned her; and I now mingled my shrieks and piteous cries for help with those which were issuing from the dressing-room. Merciful God! They were growing fainter and fainter, and gradually sinking to the sob of agony which denotes exhaustion; while I, gaining fresh power from my very terror, ran to the head of the winding-stair, and made the whole building resound with my frantic cries for help. Far down beneath my feet, seemingly at the very bottom of a deep abyss, I could hear the pattering of footsteps, the voices of men, the laughter and jesting of the audience leaving the theatre, and not till these sounds had ceased were my cries distinctly heard. Soon from every side came rushing the carpenters and scene-shifters and lamp-lighters, and all who were left behind in the theatre. My husband, amongst the first, came rushing up the stairs in wild alarm. To burst open the door with one single blow of his powerful arm was the work of a moment. I saw him tear the cloak from his shoulders, and wrap it round the charred and smoking mass which lay in a shapeless heap inanimate and silent on the floor. I saw him bear it away, while I

lay unheeded crouching down upon the bricks. No one looked at me—no one stopped to enquire how I came there. All were too much occupied in putting out the flames—too much occupied in saving the property—to think of aught beside. All, save my husband, who was flying forth through the streets with that lifeless burthen in his arms. But consciousness never returned to La Misa; and life itself was extinct before the morning. None, therefore, ever knew—none ever guessed—the involuntary share I had in that horrible catastrophe—none but . . . John! And my life has been made miserable by the dubious looks and ambiguous hints which now and then will meet me, when my husband, who has now grown rich and prosperous, and realised the ambition of his life in becoming manager of a minor theatre in London, returns home at night, bearing signs of the festivities in which he has been indulging. The jewelled star was found amongst the remnants of the stage frippery left upon the floor of La Misa's dressing-room. The setting was bent and discoloured by the fiery furnace through which it had passed; but the jewel itself shone with a dull heavy light, lurid and weird; no longer flashing and sparkling as before, but dimmed and cracked by the fire and the smoke. John brought it home and placed it in my hand, saying, as he gazed at me with a look full of meaning I understood too well: "I can never wear it again. It would bring to mind too vividly that awful night. And, on the other hand, it must not be destroyed, for it is the memento of the first happiness of my life." The girl was buried in the churchyard of St. Michael's, at Merrington. As no one knew anything of her birth or parentage, the simple stone placed at the head of her grave, by John's sense of justice and duty, bore nothing more than the name by which she had been known to us, "La Misa," with the date of her death alone. In spite of the silence observed by John upon the subject of La Misa's horrid fate, my whole existence is embittered with the idea of his suspicion that I was the voluntary cause of the catastrophe. Perhaps my trepidation, whenever the subject is mentioned in my hearing, appears to him unnatural; but, whatever the reason of his estrangement, I only know that John and I have never been the same to each other since the first night of the pantomime at the Merrington Theatre.

VISITED ON THE CHILDREN.

BY THEO GIFT.

CHAPTER III. WHAT CHADLEIGH END
THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

"THANK you for taking so much trouble about me, but I am really not hurt at all, and I was very silly to be so frightened," Sybil repeated. "I was trespassing in coming across here at all, or it couldn't have occurred."

"Then that partly accounts for my carelessness. I have rented Farmer Dyson's shooting for this week, and before starting for the upland fields this afternoon, he mentioned that I should find all the gates padlocked, for he never allowed any right of way across them; so that the last thing I expected to find in the line of my fire was a young lady."

"I know." Sybil was still blushing very deeply, and by this time was very anxious to escape. She had no idea of how lovely she was looking just then, with that pretty rose-colour in her cheeks, and the tear-drops still glittering on her long eyelashes; but she felt rather than saw the deepening admiration in the gaze still bent on her, and it embarrassed her. "But I wanted to take a short cut across, and there was a gap in the hedge. I had better go back now."

"Had you not better wait a little first? I am sure you are not able to walk yet," the young man suggested. He was as anxious to keep this shy, dainty maiden, whose trembling little hands had felt so soft and tiny in his grasp a moment back, as she was to escape, and inwardly blessed the accident which had brought him to her side; but Sybil had delayed too long already not to feel that she had sinned against her mother's strict canons of propriety.

"Thank you," she answered, trying to speak with her usual maidenly dignity. "But I am quite well now, and it is getting late already. I must make haste home. Good-evening."

She gave him a gentle little bow as she spoke and turned to leave him; but Gareth was not used to being put on one side so lightly by one of the fairer sex, and, before she knew he was following her, he was at her side again, his hat in his hand, and his handsome face looking handsomer than ever with the breeze stirring the short curly locks about his brow.

"Excuse me," he said earnestly, yet with a studious courtesy, not to say

reverence of manner, with which it would have been hard to quarrel. "I know I am taking a liberty; but you have had a severe shock, and I really do not think you are fit to walk alone so soon afterwards. Will you not allow me to accompany you, part of the way at any rate? If you were to faint——"

"Oh, but there is no fear of that," Sybil answered, smiling. She could not help smiling because he was so kind and handsome, and looked so very sorry and concerned for her; but having done so she became more eager than ever to take to flight. What if he were to persist, and mamma saw her arrive at home with a young man, a strange young man, at her side? The idea was too dreadful! "I never fainted in my life, and I would rather go home alone, much rather. It is only a little distance. Good-evening." And then she turned away again, and this time so resolutely that Gareth saw she was in earnest, and that it would be ungentlemanly to persist. Yet as he stood there, watching the slender blue figure growing smaller in the distance, a frown came on his brow, and he bit his lips, muttering discontentedly:

"She needn't have been in such a hurry to run away; I shouldn't have eaten her! What a sweet little face, though, and a perfect lady! If it wasn't for that I'd go after her even now. Lots of girls would like nothing better; but I fancy she was in earnest, and somehow I shouldn't like to vex her. Dear little thing, how pretty she looked with her eyes full of tears. I wonder if she guessed how much I would have liked to kiss them away!"

There was no sign of them when Sybil reached Hillbrow and entered the drawing-room where her mother and sister were seated, nor did she make any mention of her adventure. Mrs. Dysart suffered from a weak heart, which, indeed, was the chief cause of her always being more or less an invalid, and her daughters were always careful not to bring on an attack by any startling or unpleasant tidings. It was a relief to Sybil to be able to explain her late appearance by its original cause.

"Poor Granny Smith was worse, mamma. She could hardly swallow the soup you sent her, and there was no one with her, so I really did not like to come away till her daughter came in from the harvest-field. I thought you would not be vexed."

Mrs. Dysart smiled.

"On the contrary, dear, you were quite right; though I was getting very anxious,

for it was such a stormy sunset, and I was afraid you had not an umbrella."

"But I wish you had come in sooner, Sybil," cried Jenny eagerly. She had sat down on the floor to unbutton her sister's boots, as the latter, tired with her long walk, threw herself back in an easy-chair, "for you have missed two events; and there are so few events in every day that it is too bad not to be in the way of them when they come."

"That depends on whether they were pleasant," said Sybil. "What were these?"

"Well, first," Jenny answered slowly, and looking up in her sister's face with a half-sly glance, "first, Lion Ashleigh called."

Sybil's face grew pink all over in a moment. Hers was one of those colours which come and go very easily, and the process was very becoming to her; but she was exceedingly annoyed at it herself, and resented it on this occasion by sitting upright, and saying a little sharply: "Lion Ashleigh! You don't call that an event, do you, Jenny? Why, how often has he called before; and how many millions of times do you think he may call again?"

"Yes; but not this time," Jenny persisted, in her quaint, grave way; "and one can never feel sure about the others. They mayn't come at all, you know. Besides, I was sorry, because I could see how disappointed he was at not finding you. He kept looking at the door, and answering mamma all at random, and he would only take one cup of tea; while when you——"

"Jenny, dear," said Mrs. Dysart's soft voice, "give me my scissors. Thanks. Who is answering at random now? Why, you are chattering so fast you haven't even told Sybil your other event yet."

It was said in the gentlest tone, but somehow Sybil felt relieved and her sister subdued. The second piece of information did not come with half the zest of the first.

"Adelaide Ashleigh says the Tennis Club has decided to give a ball at Epsom at the close of the playing season, and her mother has been asked to be one of the lady patronesses. It is to be quite a grand affair. Oh, dear! I wish I were old enough to go. I suppose you will, if the Ashleighs do?"

"You will be old quite soon enough, my dear," said Mrs. Dysart. "Even if a dance were worth growing old for, which I can't say I think it is."

"Why, mamma!" cried Jenny, turning

her head to look at her. She was still sitting on the floor with a boot in her lap, and one of Sybil's slender little feet held caressingly between her hands; "you don't think I want to dance, do you? I wasn't thinking of myself. I want to go with Sybil, and look at her with all the other people round her. Of course I know she must look nicer than any of them; but I should like to see it, and one needn't be 'come out' for that. I don't believe any one would trouble to notice me."

"I am not so sure of that," said Mrs. Dysart quietly. "At any rate we will not try." And Sybil sprang up with a laugh, thrusting her little feet into the slippers Jenny had brought her.

"Jenny, you are a goose; you think no people can come up to your own family," she said gaily. "Perhaps I shan't go at all. How do I know if mamma will let me," glancing playfully at her mother, "or even if I shall be invited? You had better be sure of having something to look at before you want to go." But indeed the younger girl's admiration came as naturally to her sister as having her boots taken off. It was Jenny's way to wait on those she loved, and when the two went up to dress for dinner a few minutes afterwards she busied herself in brushing out Sybil's fair hair and fastening back the folds of her white dress before she thought of doing anything for herself, while her sister stood gazing dreamily out at the heavy storm-clouds rolling over the sky. Gareth Vane had forgotten the pretty girl in the turnip-field at that moment in the consumption of his dinner, which he ate while perusing a heavily-scented little note which had arrived for him during the day. And Sybil's thoughts were also wandering to someone else, for, after a few minutes, she asked with a slight blush:

"If Lady Ashleigh is patroness, of course they will all be there. I wonder if mamma would let me go. It would not be like a private ball, you know."

"No; they would give it at the King's Head, where they give the hunt and archery balls. Lion said so; and that he always enjoyed going to them before he was ordained. He does go to dances now and then still, doesn't he?"

"Yes; but as he doesn't dance it makes no difference to other people. I almost wonder he does not stay away altogether."

"Perhaps he likes looking on, as I should. He said once, he liked to see you dance—you moved so softly and lightly,"

said Jenny simply; but Sybil had turned to the window again, and did not seem to hear.

"Jenny," she said suddenly, "I didn't tell you downstairs for fear of frightening the mother, but I had such a start to-day. A man nearly shot me."

"Shot—you!" cried Jenny.

Sybil's tone had been dreamingly conversational rather than otherwise; but the words brought her sister to her side in a moment, with one hand grasping her nervously by the shoulder.

"Yes," said Sybil, not troubling to look round; "we were on opposite sides of the hedge, and the hare he aimed at ran right across my feet. Oh, it was only a fright—don't crumple my sleeve, Jen—and I had no business in the field at all, only I didn't see any of Farmer Dyson's men about, and I wanted to take a short cut home. It was curious though, only a few minutes before I had been looking at the sky. It was all hot and coppery-looking, and the sun was behind a cloud, and its rays came out like the fingers of a great flaming hand. I almost felt as if it were driving me on against my will somewhere, I don't know where, and then this happened. But you see it came to nothing, and he did not look—— Jenny, child, there's the dinner-ell, and your hair not done! Hurry, or you will be late."

And as Mrs. Dysart was as particular about punctuality as about most other things Jenny had to hurry in earnest, and the conversation came to an end. But that night, after Sybil was in bed, a strange dream came to her. She dreamt that she was at a ball, the Tennis Club Ball at the King's Head, and that Lionel Ashleigh was with her, walking by her side, and looking at her as Jenny said he loved to look. She looked at him too, and to her surprise the face was not Lionel's, but that beautiful one with the tender dark blue eyes that had bent so anxiously over hers in the turnip-field; and, while she looked, it became one with her mother's cameo which she was wearing on her breast, and which appeared in some mysterious way to be endowed with life, and smiling at her.

"I know it is St. John. It is more beautiful than anyone else could be," she said to Jenny, and Jenny answered:

"No, it is the Apollo. Throw it away! Throw it away!" and tried to tear it from her.

Chadleigh End had revenged itself on

Mrs. Dysart, of course, for her rejection of its hospitalities. Indeed, the little village would have been so very superior to the rest of the world had that not been the case, that I think the widow ought to have been rather grateful than otherwise, that, in addition to the stock accusations of pride and exclusiveness, she had not been credited with anything worse than aiming at the heir of Dilworth Hall for her eldest girl; and after that young gentleman's marriage—"escape," the Chadleigh Endites called it—of pursuing the same scheme with regard to his brother, who was an officer in the navy. They had found out at last "the reason why she came to settle at Hillbrow." Of course it was for nothing else but to catch those two Ashleigh boys; and if John had proved amenable to Sybil's charms, Jenny would have been brought forward for William. How disappointed Mrs. Dysart must have been, poor thing, at the failure of her deep-laid little scheme! Poor woman! Well, it hadn't done her much good, for Lady Ashleigh had been too clever for her after all, as anyone might have known she would be.

I don't think, however, that Mrs. Dysart was disappointed; or that either she or Lady Ashleigh troubled themselves very much about the reports above quoted, even if they ever heard them. Had there been even a shadow of foundation for them it might have been otherwise; but John was so much older than the Miss Dysarts, and so early taken with the charms of the Honourable Victoria, that he had not ceased to regard Sybil with the lofty patronage of a young man for a half-grown girl at the time of his engagement and of that party at which Miss Dysart made her first appearance in society; while William, a much younger lad, first at school and then at sea, was looked on more in the light of a rather troublesomely mischievous brother than a friend by the Dysart girls—Sybil and Ada keeping out of his way and ignoring him; while Jenny and he kept up a sort of perpetual warfare, showing itself in incessant teasing on his part, and sharp speeches on hers. She said he was "so stupid," and, unless Lionel was there to take her part, would rather stay at home than go to the Hall during Will's holidays; while he retorted by calling her "spitfire," or "Miss Priggy Shanks," an unkind allusion to the length and slenderness of her limbs which poor Jenny found it impossible to forgive.

It was a different case, however, with

Lionel Ashleigh, the rector's only son. Educated at Rugby, and transplanted hence to Oxford, he had never been quite so much thrown with the girls from Hillbrow as his cousins; and being one of those bullet-headed, muscular, rough-voiced lads who always look out of place except in the cricket-field or in a boat, and who combine a strong distaste for the juvenile feminine gender with an intense loyalty and admiration for "fellows" of their own sex, he had taken so little notice of his mother's small visitors as to hardly know them apart, and only interfered to save Jenny at times from being over-tortured by his cousin William, from a kind of rough rivalry for things small and weak, enhanced by the pleasure of a fight on any excuse. In this spirit he went to Oxford, where he managed to unite hard reading with athletic exercises in a way which left less leisure than ever for feminine society. Indeed, if he had any choice in that matter, it was for ladies of his mother's and Mrs. Dysart's age. He was quite fond, indeed, of the low-voiced, keen-tongued widow, and would sometimes linger for a talk with her when sent with a message from the Rectory, even while the girls' gay voices were ringing from the garden and their bright faces flitting to and fro in the verandah. He was an ardent botanist at this time, a devoted follower of Ruskin, crammed full of impossibly lofty ideas and brilliant mental chimeras; and Mrs. Dysart entered into them all, drew him out, and discussed them even more sympathetically than his mother, who adored him personally, but regarded his pet fancies as a joke, and used to beg him "not to irritate papa" by producing them at the Rectory dinner-table, in a way which Lionel did not feel to be intellectually encouraging.

Young men, however, are not cast in adamant, and the period immediately after leaving college is one which not infrequently casts a change over the spirit of their dreams. Lionel had bid good-bye to Alma Mater, and was reading for orders with a clerical friend of his father's in the wilds of Yorkshire, when John Ashleigh's engagement and that often-mentioned party in honour of it took place.

He came up to Dilworth for the latter, saw Sybil Dysart, fair, sweet, and simple-looking among the other girls, like a wood-anemone in a bouquet of gaudy garden flowers, and straightway fell hopelessly in love with her.

"Don't talk to me of what I said before," he said to his cousin William when chaffed about his sudden and undisguised surrender. "I was a boy and a fool then. I am a man now, and she is the only woman I have ever seen. All the rest are dolls and shams;" and when Sybil showed her dance-card to her mother next day it was so scrawled over with L. A.s that Mrs. Dysart could hardly make out any other name, and looked somewhat anxious over it till Sybil explained it to be "only Lion Ashleigh, but grown so big and different, and—and much nicer. You would hardly know him, mamma."

Since then he had become their near neighbour, having been given shortly after his ordination the curacy at Chadleigh End; and so few days passed without bringing him to Hillbrow on some errand or another, and so kind was Mrs. Dysart in her unvarying welcome for him, that before long the Chadleigh End gossips were again setting their heads together. Some said Mrs. Dysart, foiled at the Hall, was trying to console herself with the Rectory; others, that she had always had a design on the latter for one of her girls, only that it was to have been the "cadette" in the original programme; while a few went so far as to say that the young people were regularly engaged. This, however, reached Lionel's ears, and was promptly and indignantly denied. He was even so far affected by the rumour as to decrease his visits at Hillbrow; and as at the same time the De Boonyen family took up his denial, and went about repeating it with somewhat unnecessary energy, a counter report grew up: to wit, that haughty Mrs. Ashleigh and purse-proud Mrs. De Boonyen had come to the conclusion that birth might safely be bartered for money, and that Lion was to be made happy with the hand, not of Sybil Dysart, but of one of the flat-faced little damsels at Hapsburg Hall.

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